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Where Bible version is not stated it is the Authorised Version, otherwise:

•	CEV	Contemporary English Version
•	Darby	John Nelson Darby Translation
•	ERV	Easy to Read Version
•	Geneva	1587 Version
•	GNB	Good News Translation
•	GW	God's Word
•	ISV	International Standard Version
•	KJV	Kings James Version
•	LEB	Lexham English Version
•	LITV	Literal Translation of the Holy Bible
•	LXX	Septuagint
•	RSV	Revised Standard Version
•	YLT	Young's Literal Translation

Scripture quotations are in *italic script*. All versions can be found in e-Sword

Blessings upon Rick Meyers for e-Sword http://www.e-sword.net/ Please send him a contribution if you have not already.

Dedication

To the Saints,

Rev 22:1 And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. Rev 22:2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

Thanks be to Christ who has given us great and precious promises.

This series "Jesus the Healer" was delivered on Sunday mornings, between January and December 2016. There are certainly elements that many will find controversial and that will always be so in a study like this. That said, we have endeavoured to base our arguments upon the Scripture rather than tradition, philosophy, prejudice and denominational shibboleths. For this reason we have written the Scriptural texts with our comments, discussions and observations.

We dedicate this volume to those dear souls, who patiently sat through these ministries, or listened to them around the world and hope that they and others will be encouraged by them.

Thanks also to those who encouraged me through their ministries over the years, some now with the Lord, and others still running the race.

Special thanks to my wife Diana who has encouraged my writing and proofed this version. Any remaining mistakes, the warts, are mine.

Love in Jesus,

Mike.

20th December 2016

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1. Mighty works, signs, wonders and healing

As we start our new series on "Jesus the Healer" I want to state my own position on the subject. Do I believe that Jesus was a healer? Yes. Do I believe that Jesus heals today? Yes. Do I believe that the gifts (plural, 1Cor 12:9) of healing are still available to believers? Yes. Do I believe that every person who seeks healing will be healed? No. I could go on but it is necessary for us to establish our position from the Scripture, not what I hold to be so. The Scripture will have to mould our views.

We are left in no doubt that Jesus could perform what we call miracles from the simple fact that He is the Creator of life. Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. Joh 1:2 The same was in the beginning with God. Joh 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. Joh 1:4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men. In this simple statement is the truth that is essential to understanding just who our Lord and Saviour is. He is the Creator and in the manifestation upon earth, He is God the incarnate deity.

The purpose of John's Gospel is stated clearly. Joh 20:31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name. This is written immediately after the declaration that Thomas makes, Joh 20:28 My Lord and my God. Jesus is the anointed Son of God, coequal, coeternal and coexistent with God. He is not an ordinary mortal with special powers, a man who was just better than other men. He is the Creator.

You will see that this is where John starts his Gospel, Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. Not that the word was "a god" or that the word was divine but that the Word was God himself. If we are to arrive at that place John intended for us to arrive, namely, the belief that Jesus is the Son of God and that through that belief in His anointed we "have life through His Name", we must have come to accept that He is the Creator. That also means that we have come to believe that His work is a creation, not an evolution, for it states that everything was made by Him, so it did not come about by its own making.

The words of John mirror the words of Moses. Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God............. Gen 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. Where else could the story of Jesus begin if it were to have coherence and unity with the Universe that we exist in? Jesus has to be there in the beginning as part of the events that unfold and for which, He must at some stage, enter that creation as the object of belief, so that "ye might have life through his name". Again, creation imitates the Gospel, Joh 1:4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men. Joh 1:5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. Gen 1:3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. Gen 1:4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

If John wrote to encourage us to believe in the Son of God that we might have life through His name, it follows that without Him we are dead. It follows further, that something happened subsequent to that creation that killed us and separated us from our Creator. Death in some form has entered our world and some of the consequences of that death become a focus of this study.

It should also occur to us that John's method of evangelism is important if we are to portray Christ properly. In a generation of sceptics and evolutionary science, we are to hold this fundamental truth,

that Christ is not just our Redeemer, He is our Creator. I do not think that you can hold to Christ as Redeemer without Christ the Creator. There have been plenty of so called redeemers, religious leaders trying to help man change and him better. Not one claimed to be the Creator. Not one came back from the dead. Not one had the power over life and death. If you hold to a Redeemer, a Saviour Jesus and you reject the Creator Jesus you are following a false god.

Evangelism must begin with the declaration of who the Creator is, because it states the power of Christ. The Christ who can change the very structure of the matter of the Universe, make the laws of Physics obey Him, overcome entropy and restore mankind. This same Jesus who made man, the blind to see, the lame to walk, the dumb to speak and the dead to rise again. Paul in Athens states the case to the Greeks, Act 17:23 For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. Act 17:24 God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; There it is, God who made the world, as the Hymn puts so beautifully, "God, who made the earth, The air, the sky, the sea, Who gave the light its birth, He cares for me".

I want to encourage you in your prayers, by giving you an example of what to me seems like one of God's acts of special care, for one of His children. I want to introduce you to a lesser known hero of the Faith. In the year I874 two babies were born who grew up to be "great men" and both achieved the distinction of living over 90 years. They served their generation, indeed several generations, in very different spheres.

One of them was born in a Palace and the other in a Public House. Sir Winston Churchill, born at Blenheim Palace, was a man whose greatness, courage and leadership meant liberty for men of our generation, but the other, Ernest Luff, born at a Public House in Shinfield, near Reading. Through his ministry countless thousands of people gained freedom and spiritual life. It is said that to have known Ernest Luff was a privilege and an inspiration. Anyone who came into contact with him, not only old people, but little children, knew a sense that they had been with a man of God.

Ernest Luff's works live on and in particular his care homes for elderly Christians. His care for others is well illustrated in this story of healing¹.

"Under Captain Moreton's (his employer) instruction, Ernest Luff's knowledge of the Bible, doctrine and theology greatly increased. There were also many opportunities for evangelism in the villages round about. At the end of the garden of Woodham Walters House there was a disused Mill and he took over the counting house and conducted services there. He visited many of the homes, particularly that of a girl who suffered from rheumatoid arthritis. This poor girl was quite helpless and had been suffering like this in great pain for many years. Some time before Ernest visited her, she had been sent to hospital for special treatment. In the 1890's, hospital treatment was not as enlightened as it is today, and in order to straighten her out, tremendous weights had been put on her ankles and on her arms. When this torturesome treatment was over, it was discovered that it had bent her back to such an extent that her spine was almost broken and she resembled the letter 'C,' with her head bending towards her heels, and

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¹ "He dared to believe" Ernest Luff life story by Jean A Rees.

it was quite impossible to straighten her out again. The hospital, having done its worse, could do no more for her, and she was sent home quite incurable, to spend nights of agony and days of torture.

It seems incredible to think of those days when there was no means of relieving pain, and a girl like that could lie screaming with agony from which there was no relief. When Ernest first started visiting her, she hardly looked like a human being at all. In enduring such agony of pain that her fingers had become embedded in her palms and she was quite unable to straighten them, so that her nails were growing right through her palms. She lay like a sea-serpent in the bed. The sight of anyone in such agony was more than Ernest could bear, she was a Christian girl, and although she was trusting in the Lord she very often found the pain past bearing. It may have been the Lord, mindful of His promise that none will be tempted above that they are able, laid it upon the heart of Ernest Luff to pray with power for her. Night after night he agonized in prayer that this woman, Emma Smith, might be cured or given relief from pain, and he went so far as to pray that he might endure the pain for her, if this were possible.

One day, as he was with Captain Moreton, the postman arrived. "Have you heard the news?" he said. "That 'girl down the road is dying. Her relatives have been to see her today. I don't know what to think," he said, scratching his head, "I know women suffer. I'm a married man myself, but I've never known anything like what that woman has had to suffer. When doing my rounds I can hear her screams and groans all the way down the street. Doesn't seem right," he said and walked on.

Captain Moreton was greatly concerned and told Ernest to see whether the cook had any jelly or some broth to tempt the invalid's appetite. Taking some supplies with him, Ernest went to see Emma, and suddenly there came upon him a great conviction, an extraordinary sensation that the Lord was going to do something new.

He was welcomed at the door by Emma's mother, and asked how she was. Mrs. Smith told him that she was free of pain for the moment, if he would like to go up. Ernest went and found Emma, her face quite grey with the pain she had recently endured. "Emma," he said, "I have something to tell you." "What's that?" she said. "You're going to walk again," he said. "I know I am," she said, "I shall walk the golden streets one day."

"You're going to walk down here," he said. He doesn't know what made him say it, but a sudden conviction came to him. He knelt by the bed and prayed, quoting Psalm 86 to her: "Bow down thine ear, O LORD, hear me: for I am poor and needy. Preserve my soul; for I am holy: O thou my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee. Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto thee daily".

Emma listened closely as he went on praying: "Give ear, O Lord, unto my supplication and attend to the voice of my supplications. In my trouble I will call upon Thee, for Thou wilt answer, for Thou art great and doest wondrous things. Thou art God alone. Show me a token for good that they which hate me may see it and be ashamed, because Thou, Lord, hast helped me and comforted me."

Then, raising his hands almost without his own volition, Ernest said: "Christ Jesus make thee whole." Emma listened and three times said distinctively: "I do believe, I do believe, I do believe," and as she said those final words she did something she had not done for many, many years. Her crooked back became straight and she sat up in bed.

I would like to be able to relate that Ernest Luff was not surprised, but with calm dignity called her parents and demonstrated to them the wonderful miracle that God had performed, but this is a true story of fact. When Emma sat up in bed, Ernest was so astonished and frightened that he turned tail, ran out of the room, down the stairs, up the street, and didn't stop until, panting and breathless, he reached the house and confronted his surprised employer. Captain Moreton asked him what had happened, but all Ernest could say was: "Don't ask me. Don't ask me now. I'll tell you some other time. Something's happened, but don't ask me"."

This girl's joints were locked after years of immobility, the doctors of her day had failed to cure her, but she got up and walked. She had no shoes and when Ernest came back, he drew the shape of her feet on some paper and went to town to buy her some shoes. Emma Smith was invigorated with her new life and after training, became a district nurse. She married and had six children. Ernest did not let this event distract him from his evangelism.

I do not get the impression that Ernest would have said that he had the gift of healing but he certainly had a compassionate heart. He genuinely cared and his prayers were effectual. They were prayers that God's own child should not suffer above that which could be born and he had the conviction that she would be cured, before she was. I will not try to slot this event into some biblical formula for healing because I believe that is not the way that we should approach the subject.

How though, do we explain what happened? It was unexpected and out of the ordinary, it did not involve medical professionals, manipulation of the patient (massaging joints), physical contact or ritualistic formulae. Looking at the results of this healing from a human perspective, you could not say whether it was supernatural or the results of surgery. She was restored. You have the story and you make a decision as to what has happened.

Is it a miracle? A miracle is sometimes defined as "an effect or extraordinary event in the physical world that surpasses all known human or natural powers and is ascribed to a supernatural cause". The word is from the Latin mīrāculum, a wonder. To see how we would classify Emma's recovery, I would lay before you some definitions. There are some New Testament words that we associate with these phenomena.

Δύναμις = dunamis (the words in 'bold' are the translations of the Greek word).

- Mat 7:22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many **wonderful works**?
- Mat 11:20 Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his **mighty works** were done, because they repented not:
- Mat 22:29 Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor **the power** of God.

- Mar 5:30 And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that **virtue** had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes?
- Act 2:22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him....

Σημεῖον = sēmeion

- Mat 16:4 A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after **a sign**; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but **the sign** of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed.
- Joh 2:11 This beginning of **miracle**²**s** did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.
- Joh 4:54 This is again the second **miracle** that Jesus did, when he was come out of Judaea into Galilee.

Θεραπεύω = therapeuō

 Mat 9:35 And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

Τέρας = teras

• Mat 24:24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and **wonders**; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

So, was Emma Smith the recipient of a miracle? What would we say in the light of the above definitions? Was she "healed"? I think that she was definitely healed in a biblical manner through prayer. Was it a "mighty work"? I think so because we do not see such things on a regular basis. Was it a "wonder", an omen? I do not see that it presaged anything. Was it a "sign"? That is not at all clear as we do not have enough information.

It certainly was a marvellous healing and we might say it was a miracle, but biblically, it was a healing. Would it not be wonderful if we could all be made well instantly, without surgery or medication? We do not know how it happened metaphysically because it is beyond the sphere of our knowledge as it exists today, yet an event occurred which restored the health of Emma. How it happened is pure speculation. Why is it we all have that curiosity about how God does things? Do we really have to know how, to believe? I am reminded of the statement of the blind man whom Jesus healed. The rulers wanted to know how it happened. The man healed knew WHO did it but he did not know HOW.

Joh 9:19 And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see? Joh 9:20 His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: Joh 9:21 But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself. Joh 9:25 He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. How is irrelevant. It was done by Jesus.

² Since this was Jesus' first "sign", would it have precluded Him from healing or performing 'wonders' before this?

My personal opinion and it is just my opinion, is that Emma was healed by Jesus. You may choose not to believe that. I do and choose to give God the glory for that, you may decide otherwise. I do not read that Ernest Luff became a healer in the Churches, neither did he claim the gift of healing. I also do not see that what he did was so special, that other "ordinary" believers could not do the same. We shall examine the idea of a gift of healing next time.

Emma Smith is no longer in this world and I and sure that we would have heard if she was. She would be around 150 years of age if she were. Of course this was mere childhood for the ancient pre-flood patriarchs but to us it is not. We shall try and understand this mystery of age too, in a later study.

Emma's healing did not increase her lifespan. Healings do not ward off death and in this respect, we might say of 'healings', that they are temporary fixes in a declining world.

2. Gifts and graces

In this life, humans may be God's instruments to perform "mighty works". It is a sacred act of stewardship. We saw a healing through the prayers of Ernest Luff and we asked "was Ernest endowed with a special gift or was it something that every believer could expect to do?" Could you or I be instrumental in such a healing? To try and answer this I want to examine the life of another great saint, George Müller. You have probably have heard of his work among the orphans in Bristol. George is famous for his effectual prayer life, which was at the centre of his success. George Müller as you know, never asked any human to supply the needs of his work among orphans, he went directly to his God. This is his record of the start of his famous fundraising at the age of 30 years.

"On December 5th 1835³, however, the subject of my prayer all at once became different. I was reading Psalm 81⁴, and was particularly struck, more than at any time before, with *ver.* 10: "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." I thought a few moments about these words, and then was led to apply them to the case of the Orphan-house. It struck me that I had never asked the Lord for any thing concerning it, except to know His will respecting its being established or not; and I then fell on my knees, and opened my mouth wide, asking Him for much. I asked in submission to His will, and without fixing a time when He should answer my petition.

I prayed that He would give me **a house**, i.e. either as a loan, or that some one might be led to pay the rent for one, or that one might be given permanently for this object; further, I asked Him for £1000⁵; and likewise for suitable individuals to take care of the children. Besides this, I have been since led to ask the Lord, to put into the hearts of His people to send me articles of furniture for the house, and some clothes for the children. When I was asking the petition, I was fully aware what I was doing, i.e., that I was asking for something which I had no natural prospect of obtaining from the brethren whom I know, but which was not too much for the Lord to grant. As I have stated, that I desire to see clearly the Lord's will concerning the Orphan-House, by His providing both the

³ A narrative of some of The Lord's dealings with George Müller. Written by himself.

⁴ Ernest Luff was also inspired by a Psalm (Ps 86).

⁵ Estimated to be about £800,000 based on Labour Value.

means and suitable individuals for it, I will now mention how He has been dealing with me in these respects."

George did not ask timidly and by today's standards he was asking for a lottery win. He did not do this work because he was particularly fond of orphans or because he had seen some vision that led him to conclude that this was to be his life's work. Two weeks before he made his prayer request, he made this note.

"November 25 1835. I have been again much in prayer yesterday and today about the Orphan-House, and am more and more convinced that it is of God. May He in mercy guide me! The three chief reasons for establishing an Orphan-House are:

- 1. That God may be glorified, should He be pleased to furnish me with the means, in its being seen that it is not a vain thing to trust in Him; and that thus the faith of His children may be strengthened.
- 2. The spiritual welfare of fatherless and motherless children.
- 3. Their temporal welfare."

I hope that you have noticed that George put the spiritual ahead of the temporal. The prime reason for setting up the orphanage was to be a sign to others that God can be trusted to provide for His people and secondly the spiritual welfare of the fatherless. Giving more detail, he explains:

"It may be well to enter somewhat more minutely, than my journal does, upon the reasons which led me to establish an Orphan-House. Through my pastoral labours among the saints in Bristol, through my considerable correspondence, and through brethren who visited Bristol; I had constantly cases brought before me, which proved, that one of the especial things which the children of God needed in our day, was, to have their faith strengthened. For instance: I might visit a brother, who worked fourteen or even sixteen hours a day at his trade, the necessary result of which was, that not only his body suffered, but his soul was lean, and he had no enjoyment in the things of God. Under such circumstances I might point out to him that he ought to work less, in order that his bodily health might not suffer, and that he might gather strength for his inner man, by reading the Word of God, by meditation over it, and by prayer.

The reply, however, I generally found to be something like this: "But if I work less, I do not earn enough for the support of my family. Even now, whilst I work so much, I have scarcely enough. The wages are so low, that I must work hard in order to obtain what I need. There was no trust in God. No real belief in the truth of that word: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness: and all these things shall be added unto you."

I longed, therefore, to have something to point the brother to, as a visible proof, that our God and Father is the same faithful God as ever He was; as willing as ever to PROVE Himself to be the LIVING GOD, in our day as formerly, to all who put their trust in Him.-- Again, sometimes I found children of God tried in mind by the prospect of old age, when they might be unable to work any longer, and therefore were harassed by the fear of having to go into the poor-house. If in such a case I pointed out to them, how their

Heavenly Father has always helped those who put their trust in Him, they might not, perhaps, always say, that times have changed; but yet it was evident enough, that God was not looked upon by them as the LIVING God. My spirit was oft times bowed down by this, and I longed to set something before the children of God, whereby they might see, that He does not forsake, even in our day, those who rely upon him.

Another class of persons were brethren in business, who suffered in their souls, and brought guilt on their consciences, by carrying on their business, almost in the same way, as unconverted persons do. The competition in trade, the bad times, the overpeopled country, were given as reasons why, If the business were carried on simply according to the Word of God, it could not be expected to do well. Such a brother, perhaps, would express the wish, that he might be differently situated; but very rarely did I see that there was a stand made for God, that there was the holy determination to trust in the living God, and to depend on Him, in order that a good conscience might be maintained. To this class likewise I desired to show, by a visible proof, that God is unchangeably the same."

George wanted to encourage Christians to see that the God of the Bible was unchanging and that God was indeed "the same yesterday, today and forever". He wanted to encourage his generation and as a consequence has left a legacy for future generations. As we examine George's life, we might think that he was an exceptionally God gifted man. This is the point that George makes in respect to his work with orphans and it was that he did not possess the gift of faith. Now I find this statement quite remarkable because if you had asked me to give an example of the gift of faith in action, I would have probably chosen George Müller.

George Müller made a distinction. He distinguished between the extraordinary "gift of faith" and what he called the more ordinary "grace of faith". He believed in God's scriptural promises and so his needs were taken care of and his life thus remains as an example of God's continual care for His children. He believed that he did not have the "gift of faith", which would produce miracles but rather the "grace of faith" which enabled him to simply believe the Scriptures.

This is what George said earlier in 1832:

"About this time I repeatedly prayed with sick believers till they were restored. Unconditionally I asked the Lord for the blessing of bodily health, (a thing which I could not do now) and almost always had the petition granted. In some instances, however, the prayer was not answered. In the same way, whilst in London, in Nov. 1829, in answer to my prayers, I was immediately restored from a bodily infirmity under which I had been labouring for a long time, and which has never returned since. The way in which I now account for these facts is as follows. It pleased the Lord, I think, to give me in such cases something like the gift (not grace) of faith, so that unconditionally I could ask and look for an answer.

The difference between the gift and the grace of faith seems to me this. According to the gift of faith I am able to do a thing, or believe that a thing will come to pass, the not

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⁶ It is important to understand what George meant by "miracles". See our definitions in Chapter 1.

doing of which, or the not believing of which would not be sin; according to the grace of faith I am able to do a thing, or believe that a thing will come to pass, respecting which I have the Word of God as the ground to rest upon, and, therefore, the not doing it, or the not believing it would be sin. For instance, the gift of faith would be needed, to believe that a sick person should be restored again though there is no human probability: for there is no promise to that effect; the grace of faith is needed to believe that the Lord will give me the necessaries of life, if I first seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness: for there is a promise to that effect. Mat 6:31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? Mat 6:32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. Mat 6:33 But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you".

If I understand his position, he was suggesting that there are things that are written in God's word that are automatically ours by faith. These are received according to his thinking, by the "grace of faith" as he calls it. The things for life are promised to us because God knows that we need these things. We believe this, by that "grace of faith", he says. If we did not believe this word, if we did not have faith in this word it would be a sin, because God has promised it and to deny it is to call God a liar. It would be a sin to deny it.

The "gift of faith", George saw as something extraordinary, 1Co 12:8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; 1Co 12:9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; He saw the "gift of faith" as something required to accomplish something that went far beyond the normal expectations, for example, faith that a sick person could be healed. In his eyes such a personal act of healing, because it was not specifically defined in Scripture, would not be accomplished by the "grace of faith" and as such if you could not believe that person would be healed it would **not** be a sin.

I think that you get an idea as to how George Müller saw the operation of faith. It was twofold, in his mind. The things that you could naturally expect (i.e. by the grace of faith) and the things which you could not naturally expect (i.e. by the gift of faith). **Was he right?** It is quite clear that the Lord did some extraordinary works through George but those works were accomplished without an explanation as to how they were accomplished. George put an interpretation upon that accomplishment but I question if he was right in his explanation?

The Bible does not make the distinction in faith that George Müller made. Faith is faith. Faith by definition is being fully persuaded of the things that God says. It is believing. Rom 4:19 And not being feeble in faith though his body seemed to him little better than dead he being about a hundred years old and Sarah was no longer able to have children: Rom 4:20 Still, he did not give up faith in the undertaking of God, but was made strong by faith, giving glory to God, Rom 4:21 And being certain that God was able to keep his word. Rom 4:22 For which reason it was put to his account as righteousness. BBE. Faith gives us the strength to act upon things we cannot see and produces works of faith. Faith produces total conviction, knowledge that fully persuades us. Heb 11:3 Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. The 11th Chapter of Hebrews is a tableau of faith and faith in action. Read it and be encouraged.

I believe that George Müller was "fully persuaded" about the things that God would do in his life. Like Abraham, he did not stagger at God's promise, but was made strong in faith. God, I believe acted upon George to make him a person of strong faith.

Could we all become George Müllers? I would not discount the possibility but there do not seem to be many who emerged from his great shadow. Each of us in Christ has certainly received one of the "graces of faith" if we should call them that? *Eph 2:8 For by grace* are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Salvation is a gift of grace and a grace of faith. All things that we receive are by the grace of God, and our God is the God of all grace. 1Pe 5:10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

I believe that we are not all going to be George Müllers, because there is a spectrum of faith. Faith is not a "one size fits all" garment. In matters of conscience some lack faith and thus are weak in faith. Rom 14:1 Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. By Müller's definitions, it would have been a sin **not** to eat of the meats that God had called clean in the NT because as George said, "respecting which I have the Word of God as the ground to rest upon, and, therefore, the not doing it, or the not believing it would be sin". Yet it is clearly not a sin to avoid meat and if a man is a vegetarian, he eats herbs, it is weak faith but it is not sinful.

Faith can be shaken in a short time. We can be distracted from the object of our faith. *Mat 14:30 But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. Mat 14:31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? Peter is a "small faith" (ὀλιγόπιστος = oligopistos). Abraham's was a strong faith. <i>Rom 4:20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong* (ἐνδυναμόω = endunamoō) *in faith, giving glory to God;* He was on the high end of the spectrum of faith, he was empowered in faith. The man who came to Jesus with a sick demon possessed child was on the low end of the spectrum. *Mar 9:23 Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. Mar 9:24 And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.* He asked for help to overcome his "faithlessness", or lack of faith.

We do not need bucket loads of faith to achieve great things. Luk 17:5 And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith. Luk 17:6 And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you. But we do need faith. Some might believe that they could support a few orphans. Others might believe that they could support someone who had an orphanage. Yet others might have faith to build one orphanage and beyond that there is George Müller whose belief knew no bounds and who built five huge orphan houses on Ashley Downs at Bristol.

We are, I think, all somewhere on the spectrum of faith but I do not think that we are stuck where we are for this life. I think that we can increase our faith and move up the spectrum. That faith grows as we know more of our Father. Rom 10:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. That faith in turn pleases God, Heb 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. There are some conditions in there.

Faith does many wonderful things but not everyone did the same things and not everyone did everything. Heb 11:4 By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh. Heb 11:5 By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

Faith comes in all shapes and sizes and for different aspects of God's works. Faith to believe Creation, faith to believe the right sacrifice, faith to be translated, faith to build an ark, faith to move to another country, faith to conceive, faith to suffer affliction, faith to cross a sea, faith to make walls fall down and so on. What do you and I have faith to do? Do we lack faith or do we just avoid thinking about the consequences of exercising faith?

3. Charismatic lovers

We have examined Ernest Luff's prayer for healing and George Muller's faith to grow an orphanage. Did these men have gifts and if so, what are the gifts? The word charisma (χ άρισμα), gift, comes from the Greek word for favour or kindness. The Charismata (plural) reflect God's kindness to us in His providence of gifts and they are:

- Romans 12:4 -12. Exhortation, giving, leadership, mercy, prophecy, service, teaching.
- 1 Corinthians 12:4 10, 28. Administration, apostle, discernment, faith, healings, helps, knowledge, miracles (mighty works), prophecy, teaching, tongues, tongues interpretation, wisdom.
- **Ephesians 4:11**. Apostle, evangelist, pastor, prophet, teacher.

I have a problem in understanding why George Muller thought that "faith" was required in a healing? He says, "For instance, the gift of faith would be needed, to believe that a sick person should be restored again though there is no human probability". Why "faith", when there exists already, the "gift of healing" or to be more accurate, "the gifts of healing"?

There are sadly those who think everything supernatural in the NT ended with the last written word of Scripture (the canon of Scripture established) and with the decease of the twelve Apostles no more miracles occurred. This is not an argument to be found in the Bible. These people make appeal to this Scripture, 1Co 13:8 The love doth never fail; and whether there be prophecies, they shall become useless; whether tongues, they shall cease; whether knowledge, it shall become useless; 1Co 13:9 for in part we know, and in part we prophecy; 1Co 13:10 and when that which is perfect $(t\acute{e}\lambda\epsilon\iota o\varsigma = teleios)$ may come, then that which is in part shall become useless. YLT. When all things come to a conclusion (telos), when all things are complete, when that which is perfect comes, then of course these things serve no purpose. The argument must be, to the contrary, that if we are not there yet and perfection has not arrived yet, these gifts are still necessary. It is not referring to, and has nothing to do with, Scripture being complete.

There is however another aspect of the gifts that we should also note. The gifts were given to the "body" of Christ's people. They function, or rather they should function, to bring us into a mutual fellowship. They are like a force that should mutually attract us. 1Co 12:11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. 1Co 12:12 For as the body is

one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

This "body of Christ" has members who should care for each other and edify one another and as I have suggested before, it is a duty. It also means that sometimes we must be involved in removing a diseased structure, cutting out the rot, so as to rebuild a solid structure. I challenge you, "do you want to change people, build people for Christ, or just be popular with everyone and say nothing?" Do you want to see spiritual cripples or robust Christians, exercising their faith? Change is not always pleasant but it is necessary and you will probably get no thanks for it. Where are our concerns?

Paul advises that even the least in the body are worthy of care. 1Co 12:23 And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. 1Co 12:24 For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: 1Co 12:25 That there should be no schism in the body; but that **the members should have the same care one for another.** 1Co 12:26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. 1Co 12:27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

If we are to be obedient to Scripture we should desire the best gifts and not reckon that they have all ceased. 1Co 12:30 Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak languages? Do all interpret? 1Co 12:31 But zealously strive after the better gifts. And yet I show you a way according to excellence: LITV. How can people say that the gifts have left the Church when God encourages us to seek them zealously? The Scripture also says that there is a way according to excellence. Not that there is an alternative to charismata as some say. It is not saying that there is a way that is better without charisma than a way with charisma. That a way of love is to be preferred or even is better than a way with charismata. 1Co 12:31 But zealously strive after the better gifts. And yet I show you a way according to excellence: 1Co 13:1 If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but I do not have love, I have become as sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. 1Co 13:2 And if I have prophecies, and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so as to move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. LITV.

The "way according to excellence" is not an alternative to the charismata. Love is not a better substitute for charismata. It is not saying that a person with love is better than a person with charismata. To the contrary, love is a way of enhancing charismata. Love brings the charismata to life. The charismata without love are like a meaningless sound. The tongue of the angel is reduced to a hammer on brass. It has lost its beauty and elegance. Love enhances the charismata, elevating them from a mere action to an ethereal blessing. Love elevates the charisma to the realm of angels.

I think that "love" ($\dot{\alpha}\gamma\dot{\alpha}\pi\eta$ = agapē) like faith, also has a spectrum. Love for God, self Love, Love to obey, love to lay down life, Love for a wife, Love for friends, Love for your neighbour, Love for your enemies. If we examine our lives we would say that it is probably easier to love a neighbour than an enemy. Already we have made a distinction. It is probably easier to love a friend than a neighbour, unless your neighbour is a friend. Jesus appears to have loved some more than others, *Joh 19:26 When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved.....* I suspect that we too will feel more inclined to love some brethren more than others but that is the nature of love.

There is something else that I wish to say on the nature of love and that is, people who do not know the depths of personal sin will not be great lovers. Luk 7:47 Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for **she loved much**: but **to whom little** is forgiven, the same loveth little. Luk 7:48 And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. There are those who do not appreciate the depths of forgiveness. I am not saying that they are not forgiven or that they have no love at all. There are those perhaps, who came to Christ when they were young or others who have not lived riotously and known the "depths of satan". They are what we might call good, upright people and never "bad" people and they mostly kept "good" company. They perhaps have not appreciated the extent of sin in their lives and in the world and as a consequence do not see the desperate state of others. They cannot summon up the depths of the love of God for the sinner because they have not experienced it in their own lives. Their love is shallow and they love little. Just as there are "little faiths", there are "little lovers".

If you want to be a great lover then you need to explore the saving work of Christ and as the hymn says, "count your blessing". Yet however we exercise the gifts, their effect will be enhanced according to the love applied.

As we have said, all gifts come from Christ and should be used for building up the body. *Eph 4:8* Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. *Eph 4:9* (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? *Eph 4:10* He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)⁷ *Eph 4:11* And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; *Eph 4:12* For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

As the body is built up, or edified, it becomes fortified against the errors of men. *Eph 4:14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; Eph 4:15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: Eph 4:16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. It is built up in that most excellent way, it is built up in love.*

Why are these charismata apparently less in evidence today? I hardly think that you would desire them if you were told that they have ceased to exist. I also think that charisma cannot function in a place where they are not allowed to function, churches where the service is so rigid, you cannot even choose a hymn.

However, our purpose here is not to examine all of the charismata, since our study is about healing. We have seen that the gifts have a particular purpose in the body of Christ, to edify (build up) the body and minister to believers. I would hope that we see our relationship between each other, as disciples, as being mutually supportive not parasitic. I know that many gather together for what they can get and not for what they can give. These people are unfortunately like cancers in the body. They destroy it through making their own development the priority.

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⁷ Light grey section is a parenthesis.

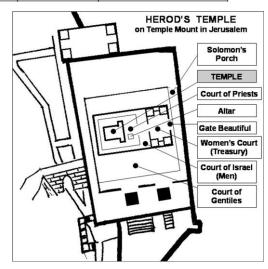
Focusing on healing, let us imagine that the "gifts of healing" are like a medicine cabinet or a medicine kit. There are cures for various ailments, instruments to remove splinters, lance boils, bandage cuts and disinfect wounds. If you have been gifted all or some of those things, do you need to believe that they work to use them? I do not need a flash of inspiration to see what is needed if there is an infected cut? If I have the "healing gift" or "gifts" they should be subject to me as gifts are. 1Co 14:31 For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. 1Co 14:32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. 1Co 14:33 For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. Gifts are to be used in an orderly manner, not in competition and above all for edification.

However, if the Christians are walking by faith, in fellowship with Christ and with one another, I ask the question, "why would they be sick and in need of healing?" Perhaps the answers to this question will throw some light upon the "gifts of healing"? Let us examine the few references to healing in the early Church (from the book of Acts) and try to understand what is happening. See Table below:

Reference	Sickness Person	Healing requested	Result	How achieved	Healer	Purpose
Acts 3:11	Lame man	No	Healed	Sign	Apostles Peter and John	Gospel witness open doors
Acts 9:17	Blindness Paul	No	Healed	Laying on of hands	Disciple Ananias	Integrate with disciples
Acts 9:32	8yr Palsy Aeneas	?	Healed	Word	Apostle Peter	Gospel witness open doors
Acts 9:36	Death Tabitha	Byfriends	Raised	Word and prayer	Apostle Peter	Restore to service
Acts 14:6	Congenitally lame Unknown man	Observable faith	Healed	Command	Apostle Paul	Gospel witness open doors
Acts 16:16	Demoniac Female	No	Healed	Command	Apostle Paul	Remove the annoyance
Acts 19:11	Various	Possibly	Healed	Handkerchiefs Aprons	Apostle Paul	?
Acts 20:9	Fall Eutichus	No	Healed	Prayer Hands	Apostle Paul	Restore Disciple after accident
Acts 28:8	Bloody flux Publius	?	Healed	Prayer Hands	Apostle Paul	Restore to health
1Cor 11:30	Unspecified Church members	?	?	?	?	Restoration on repentance
2 Cor 12:7	"Thorn" in the flesh Paul	Yes	No	Not	-	-
Php 2:25	Unspecified Epaphroditus	?	?	Prayer request	?	?
1 Tim 5:23	Chronic stomach problem Timothy	?	?	Wine	?	?
2 Tim 4:20	Unspecified Trophimus	?	?	?	?	?

The first recorded healing of the NT is at the gate of the Temple and involves a man lame from birth, a congenital affliction. Act 3:2 And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called **Beautiful**, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple;Act 3:11 And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.

I imagine that from his location at the Temple, the lame man had probably seen Jesus, because he was laid near to the Treasury, where Jesus had sat and observed 'how' people gave.



It would have been a good place to beg alms and some beggars did well at it. There were doubtless many in Israel who were not healed by Jesus when He walked here and for a time this man is one of them. It may also illustrate that there is a perfect time to apply healing but it was still "in Jesus Name". Other examples of people living with chronic infirmities are the man born blind, the woman with a flow of blood 12 years and the woman with a spirit of infirmity for 18 years. This may further demonstrate that the significance of the event lies not in the healing but in what it was to achieve in a wider sphere. There is a perfect time to heal and these were signs of something greater. *Act 4:22 for above forty years of age was the man upon whom had been done this sign of the healing*. YLT. The healing was the sign that opened up the Gospel.

One of the primary uses of signs, wonders and mighty works is to establish the credentials of the Evangelists. Heb 2:4 God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will. If these men do an extraordinary thing, then we should perhaps also listen to what they say, because there is a great power working with them? The "sign" that was worked on the lame man, gave impetus to the spread of the Gospel and also increased persecution. It could have be anyone that was healed as long as the effect spread the Gospel.

You will also observe that the lame man was not seeking to be healed, he was at the entrance to the treasury and he knew that the people who came here normally had money. He was after money but the Apostles did not have any cash. Act 3:3 Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms. Act 3:4 And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. Act 3:5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. Act 3:6 Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. Well, that was quite unexpected but welcome. For many people living with an infirmity, it just does not occur that they can be healed and sometimes people are even healed if they do not ask for it. It does not appear that faith to be healed was a condition of the lame man's healing either. Such is the strange world of healing.

While we are looking at healings, I want to mention in passing that sometimes, healthy people are made sick and may even be killed. Life and death accompany the Gospel. Ananias and Sapphira were a couple who promised something to the Saints and then went back on their promise. The Apostle rebukes them. Act 5:4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. Act 5:5 And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.

Many wonderful signs and healings accompanied the Apostles as the Gospel spread. Act 5:15 Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. Act 5:16 There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one...... Act 8:7 For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. I think that these manifestations were to add credibility to the words of the Apostles, as we have observed, Heb 2:4 God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will.

It is not made clear whether the people healed were Jews, Gentiles, believers or unbelievers and it does not seem that the primary activity of the early church is to go out and rid the world of physical sickness. What is clear is that there was a broad spectrum of diseases healed and that the world of demons and 'possession' was a present reality to the disciples.

We move on to examine the healing of Paul. Following his famous meeting with Jesus on the Damascus road Paul was struck with blindness. After three days a disciple is sent by Jesus to restore his sight. Act 9:10 And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. Act 9:11 And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, Act 9:12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. Ananias is not an apostle but he is chosen to visit Paul. Act 9:17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. Act 9:18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

What was the purpose of Paul's blindness and healing? I think that it is for the purpose of integrating Paul into the church and uniting him with the saints. If he had been left alone it could have created a division within the church. If he had only been integrated by being healed by another apostle he might have been distanced from the ordinary believers. So, bringing Paul into the body using an ordinary disciple is a wise act. It also shows that mighty works are not the sole domain of the apostles. The purpose of this wonder is to uphold the unity of the believers.

What have we seen in this study so far?

- 1. We have seen that there are many different gifts of the Spirit and they are to build up the believers and create a unity of the Spirit. They should be like a glue that binds the joints, 1Co 12:25 That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.
- 2. There are "gifts" of healing but it is not clear whether this means that there is a specialism and that some disciples heal one kind of disease and another disciple heals a different disease.
- 3. Using the gifts with love enhances the gift.
- 4. Big lovers know the depths of forgiveness.
- 5. The Lord will impose a disability for His glory (e.g. the Blind man, Saul etc).
- 6. Some illnesses and sicknesses are given to people for a purpose related to a future healing. It will come to pass at a time that will glorify God and bless the advance of the Gospel.
- 7. Personal faith by the person healed is not always required. The healer heals.
- 8. It is mostly one on one healing.
- 9. Demon possession was regarded as a sickness in need of healing.
- 10. It was not just apostles who were instruments of healing, so were disciples.
- 11. The Lord may instruct a disciple to perform a healing. It is not clear if this always the case or not.
- 12. The requirement to repent of sin before being healed is not a rule.

4. Reasons to heal

We continue our examination of the healings that occurred in the New Testament church. As Peter continues to advance the Gospel, he arrives at Lydda. Lydda or Lod as it is known today lies between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv (Joppa/Jaffa) on the Mediterranean coast. Act 9:32 And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all quarters, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda. Act 9:33 And there he found a certain man named Aeneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy. Act 9:34 And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately. Act 9:35 And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord.



There was already a community of believers in Lydda so his visit may have been to encourage and strengthen the saints, which it certainly did, as well as bringing a mass conversion.

The next healing is slightly different, it is a resurrection. Act 9:36 Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was **full of good works** and almsdeeds which she did. Act 9:37 And it came to pass in those days, that **she was sick, and died:** whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber. Act 9:38 And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring him that he would not delay to come to them. Act 9:39 Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them. Act 9:40 But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up. Act 9:41 And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive. Act 9:42 And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord.

Joppa or Jaffa as it is better known, is the home of the famous oranges and is the oldest suburb of Tel Aviv. It is about 15 kilometres from Lud. When Tabitha died, her friends sent a message to Peter who was down on the coast at Jaffa. It would have been a good day's journey and possibly more, so the burial was delayed in expectation of Peter's arrival.

Tabitha (meaning gazelle) was a genuine serial "do gooder". She made garments for widows and gave alms to the poor. She did not have to die and could have gone on with her works for years but this hiatus is introduced and she dies and comes back again. Death is not a chance affair as Job noted. Job 14:1 Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. Job 14:2 He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not. Job 14:3 And dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into judgment with thee? Job 14:4 Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one. Job 14:5 Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass;

If you are worried about death, these words should be comforting because you will never die before your time. For the child of God, this is the glorious homecoming to our Father, the reunion with our

true family, the beginning of life as it should be. What an inconvenience then to be brought back. Perhaps the only time after death we would want to hear the words, *Joh 11:43 Lazarus, come forth.* Would be at the general resurrection, not to hear them and come back to this world. Heaven is far better. What should our attitude be to the life here with Christ or there in glory with Christ? Paul gives us his position. *Php 1:21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. Php 1:22 But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. Php 1:23 For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Php 1:24 Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. Death for Paul was the preferred option. It was far better to be with Christ in the fullest sense. Yet he realised that this desire must be tempered by his concerns for his brothers and sisters. Of course, neither he nor any one of us is indispensable but it shows that his concern was not selfishly driven. He cared for others and this is a most important point.*

If we were given an option to extend our lives, for example, like King Hezekiah, what would we do with the extension? 2Ki 20:1 In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live..... 2Ki 20:3 And Hezekiah wept sore..... 2Ki 20:5 Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the LORD. 2Ki 20:6 And I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

We see that Hezekiah did not waste those added years that God gave him. Perhaps it was the spur to make the best of them? 2Ki 20:19 Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah, Good is the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. And he said, Is it not good, if peace and truth be in my days? 2Ki 20:20 And the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and all his might, and how he made a pool, and a conduit, and brought water into the city, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 2Ki 20:21 And Hezekiah slept with his fathers: and Manasseh his son reigned in his stead. In the book of Chronicles, it mentions the blessings that he had and above all his "goodness". If we had a situation like that, what would we do with the extra time? If we would do something better if we had more time, then why are we not doing that better thing now? We need convincing of our mortality.

Are prayers for healing selfish desires, which only have a care for more time here, in this world? Are people wanting to be repaired, so that they can continue to live selfish lives, for selfish ends? Should you really pray for such people? I am reminded of the footballer George Best who had a liver transplant which offered a new lease of life. What did he do with his new lease? He would ruin it by continuing his old way of life. I am not prepared to pray for people to be healed to continue fruitless lives of self-indulgence. What I will pray for is healing to create an opportunity for service to Christ. And while we are on this subject let me ask how you view praying for sick unbelievers, if you do? Well, is there anything of Christ in that prayer except the ending, Amen? I leave you to ponder this.

Sometimes our prayers are weighted with selfishness. We want more time to include in our own selfish lives. Like the foolish man in the Gospels who built bigger barns for a long happy and selfish retirement, only to be retired permanently by God, on the very night he completed his preparation.

Luk 12:20 But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? Luk 12:21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

Our prayers for others may also be tinged with self. We want someone to live because it will discomfort us if they die. It will be an emotional inconvenience to our lives. We are not so much thinking of the sick and suffering, but of ourselves. We should ask ourselves a question when we encounter sickness and death. Are my concerns for the sick person or are they for me? Do I want a person to recover because it will benefit the sick or because it will alleviate my sorrow? Am I being selfish in my approach to sickness? Can I, as we shall see with Paul in a later study, accept the sufficient grace of God to bear with what is laid upon me, whether I am the sick person or the friend of the sick?

We need to examine our own motives for healing because they can be extremely selfish. It might be because we do not want the sorrow associated with sickness and death. It might be because we are so ensconced in this world that we want everything to continue as it is without change, world without end. It has saddened me that there are people that I have met, calling themselves Christians, who are not ready to be with Christ, which is far better. There is something in them which finds this life preferable to the life to come. Yet as we have already stated, all healings are a temporary fix. Absolute healing comes in the life hereafter. We all need to face death and that is a subject for another ministry.

Then perhaps there are those really genuine, heartfelt losses, where the world has lost a great treasure, too soon for them. A light has been extinguished before we were ever ready for it. We knew it would come but it came too soon. I see Tabitha's death like this. The resurrection was a merciful act to the grieving widows but perhaps not quite so merciful to Tabitha, "for to be with Christ is far better". This resurrection also, we should note, opened up the Gospel as people were convinced of the power of God.

The next healing we examine is another congenital defect. These types of infirmities perhaps magnify the healing power because they are in many ways hopeless cases. Act 14:6 and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about: Act 14:7 And there they preached the gospel. Act 14:8 And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked: Act 14:9 The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, Act 14:10 Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked. Act 14:11 And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.

I would just like to point out that this healing is not simply a question of putting the physical defects right. You may remember that walking is not simply accomplished because you have two good legs. You learn to walk and there are all sorts of processing issues and motor controls that you come to learn. This healing encompassed a complicated process so that man could leap and walk. More than that, this healing opens up an opportunity for the Gospel and you will notice that Paul preaches from Creation to Christ. It also got Paul stoned by the Jews.

It was in Philippi that we encounter the next healing, which is an exorcism. Act 16:16 And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: Act 16:17 The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation. Act 16:18 And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour. Act 16:19 And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers, Act 16:20 And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city.

This event leads to Paul and Silas being imprisoned. During the night when they are praising God, there is an earthquake and the prison doors burst open. The Philippian jailor fears for his life but the outcome of this event is that he and his household are saved. Now if Paul and Silas had stated their Roman citizenship at the start, they would neither have been beaten nor put into jail. In that event, the jailor and his household would not have been saved. Paul waits until after the imprisonment to rebuke the magistrates who wrongfully imprisoned him, *Act 16:37 But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out.* Was Paul forewarned of all this? I think that he was and was walking by faith.

Next we see that the healing of the demon possessed woman is part of a chain of events in God's saving grace. And so as to confuse us even further about the mysteries of healing, there were very strange methods of achieving that goal. *Act 19:11 And God wrought special miracles* (δ úvαμις = dunamis) by the hands of Paul: Act 19:12 So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them. Now I have heard of churches who have done this, have prayed over hankies and sent them out and it is a nice thought. However, if it lacks the power, it is a well meaning fraud. The things that Paul did were special or uncommon. *Act 19:11 And God did uncommon works* of power through the hands of *Paul*, LITV. I am not saying that this is beyond us today but it is not a common thing. I draw your attentions to the words "And God did uncommon works", not by Paul but **through** Paul.

I will also direct your attention to the prime directive given by Jesus to the Apostles, *Mat 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Mat 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Mat 28:20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen. The apostles were not to be service providers, births, marriages and burials, neither a health service for the body. That was all incidental to the Gospel, which has it focus upon teaching, discipling and baptizing. That is where the deacons (servants) came in, <i>Act 6:2 Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the Word of God, and serve tables. Act 6:3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.*

I have already suggested a division between healing within the body of believers and healing outside of the body of believers. If we are charged to preach the Gospel, outside of the body of believers, do we see healing as an accessory to advance the Gospel or would it become the focus of our ministry

as is sometimes the case in our day. Many mass campaigns have as their themes, the prosperity Gospel, Healing, being successful or some aspect of psychotherapy and counselling. Is that what we should be focusing on when it comes to evangelisation?

Within the church, do we see healing as a means of edifying and unifying the body of Christ or is it or is it to focus a spotlight on us and our supposed "spirituality"? It is here that we should examine our motivation for wanting these manifestations. We should also draw back from hopeful imitation. I have seen people try and copy the works of Apostles making the assumption that because Peter or Paul did it, they automatically have a right to do it. They lay "claim" to the gifts. I used to hear people being told that they should claim the gifts (back in the 1970's) as if they were all laid out at the side of the road and you just had to grab yours. If you did not have a gift you were quite often viewed as a spiritual inferior. People, contrary to Scripture, viewed speaking in tongues as the greatest gift. It was certainly showy, whether it was genuine is another matter?

This disgraceful approach has done more harm than good and in some cases made the church a laughing stock. I remember a dear old brother who decided one day that he would be healed and his sight would be restored to perfect health. I know that he wanted this but apart from his own wish, there was no evidence that it would come to pass. As if to aid his faith he made a show of throwing his spectacles away. I believe that he replaced them shortly afterwards. I also recall that leg lengthening was in vogue at the time and many hundreds were healed of this 1970's epidemic. It did nothing to advance the faith, to the contrary it was seen as a joke.

As we have noted, some people do not ask to be made well and some cannot ask. Our next example is one who cannot ask and it is the result of a long sermon during which a young man succumbed, as many of us do in such circumstances, to "a little slumber a little folding of the hands to sleep". I offer some advice if you find yourself in this situation and it is, do not sit in a window! Act 20:9 And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead. Act 20:10 And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him. Act 20:11 When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed. Eutychus died in his sleep surrounded by his brethren which is not a bad way to go. Just what he did with that life returned to him, we do not know.

This was remarkably kind of the Lord to undo a sequence of events that led to this death. The causes were well within the control of the disciples. I wonder if there were any lessons learned? Did this lead to a more formal arrangement of "safe seating" when listening to ministries? Did Paul learn to reduce the length of his preaching or start to look more closely at his congregation whilst he preached, to see if they had "timed out"? Did they begin to preach earlier in the evening? Perhaps we need to learn that many events in life are by the grace of God far less traumatic if we exercise His wisdom.

As we conclude this section, what conclusions might we draw?

- 1. The gifts and healing in particular played an important part in the propagation of the Gospel. Healings were often associated with conversions.
- 2. We should carefully examine our motives when seeking for Divine healing.

- 3. Should we pray for the healing of selfish people? If we should what should we pray?
- 4. Do extensions to life in this world result in service to Christ or service to self? If we were given more time, would we use it wisely?
- 5. If we had gifts of healing, how would we use them? Would they be used to glorify Christ or satisfy some need in us to make people better and reduce suffering for its own sake?
- 6. Imitating acts in the Bible does not constitute a biblical approach to healing unless it comes with God's authority. Praying over hankies is a nice thought but not honest unless it is a special work of God.
- 7. Many of life's tragedies are a result of our human negligence. Can we always expect God to fix our mistakes, when, if we had taken His advice, they would not have happened in the first place?

5. Does God heal recurring (or chronic) illness?

Before we consider whether or how God heals chronic sickness (Timothy's stomach), we have one more healing to examine in the Acts of the Apostles. It occurs on the Island of Malta, following Paul's shipwreck, while on his way to Rome. Paul, the passengers and the entire crew survive the Euroclydon storm and are battered onto the beach in Malta. If you have seen the coast of Malta, you will know that it is very rocky but there is one sandy beach, facing east, towards the northern end of the Island. This is known today as St. Paul's bay and it is where the apostle is supposed to have waded ashore.



According to tradition the apostle took refuge in a cave, now known as St. Paul's Grotto in Rabat. It was also after their arrival here in Malta that they began preaching about Christianity to the Maltese people. Paul's Grotto, so called, in Rabat became one of the earliest places of Christian worship on the island and Paul's gift of healing and the fact that he remained unharmed after a snakebite made the locals regard him as a god.

During his winter stay, he was invited to the house of Publius, the Roman governor on the Island. It was here that Paul cured Publius' father of a serious fever. Act 28:8 And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a **fever and of a bloody flux**: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him. Act 28:9 So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed. While we cannot say for certain what the fever and flux were, it looks like dysentery.

Dysentery⁸ was a very common ailment among the people of the mid-East. It was due primarily to three types of organisms—amoebae, bacteria and worms⁹. In some cases the body adjusted itself to the invading organism, and there would be only sporadic

⁸ https://www.biblicaltraining.org/l<u>ibrary/diseases-Bible</u>

⁹ All of these are God's creatures and serve a purpose in His Creation. Sometimes they work against us.

attacks of diarrhoea. But often it was very severe, and at times so bad it was called malignant dysentery. Plague is the most striking example of such malignancy. Passage of stools was painful with dysentery because of the irritating effect of the excretions. Haemorrhoids developed, and at times there was a prolapse of the lower part of the colon, as was the case with Jehoram (a bad man), 2Ch 21:18 And after this, Jehovah struck him in his bowels by disease for which there was no healing; 2Ch 21:19 and it happened, from days to days, and as the time went out, the end of two years of days, his bowels went out because of his sickness; so he died of painful diseases. And his people made no burning for him, like the burning of his fathers. There was also rapid loss of weight, and death might ensue within a few days. Publius "lay sick with fever and dysentery," and we can readily appreciate his gratitude when God healed him.

Publius is said to have converted to Christianity and was made the first Bishop of Malta. The Cathedral of Mdina is said to stand on the site of Publius' house.

We now examine those sicknesses for which we do not know the outcome and it is here that we encounter perhaps, one of the boundaries to Divine healing. It will lead us in later studies to consider natural medicine and science and ask whether we should still ask for God's healing, Divine intervention, or whether we should see a doctor?

The cases that we shall now refer to are Trophimus, Epaphroditus and Timothy. 2Ti 4:20 Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick ($\dot{\alpha}\sigma\theta\epsilon\nu\dot{\epsilon}\omega$ = astheneō). We have no idea what sickness or weakness Trophimus suffered. He was too sick to travel from Miletus (south of Samos in Turkey) and I would suggest that Trophimus was in a very poor state of health indeed. The question that is probably going through your mind is, "Why didn't Paul heal him?"

Here we can think of a very simple solution. Paul can heal, there is a sick disciple, so what is stopping him? Has Paul lost the gift of healing? No, because he exercises it a year or so later in Malta. Was Trophimus labouring under a particular sin and suffering sickness s a result? I do not see that is so because Paul is not slow to point out sin in the church such as with Hymenaeus and Alexander. 1Ti 1:20 Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme. 2Ti 2:17 And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus;

Did this happen to Trophimus so that he would be spared the imprisonment with Paul in Rome and that he was given this sickness because the Lord wished to separate him for another work? Could it even be that Trophimus, for some personal reason, decided not to seek healing and like Paul accept the "sufficient grace" of God to bear his illness? We have no idea at all. What we do see is that Christians are not exempt debilitating illnesses.

It is generally assumed that people want to be healed but why should this always be the case? I will also point out that since, for most Christians, the doctor is the first choice for healing today, many never even seek Divine healing. It seems to me to be a bit of a cheek to involve God as a last resort healer, a last desperate attempt when all else has failed, because we could not believe God when we were first sick. When things become extreme and the less likely the recovery, the more likely people are to seek the Divine and the miraculous is worth a try. This attitude is not consistent with a close walk with God.

Epaphroditus was also extremely sick, in fact on his deathbed. Php 2:25 Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants. Php 2:26 For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick. Php 2:27 For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. He appears to have recovered from the sickness because God had mercy on him. That does not necessarily mean that it was a supernatural healing and we do not know that the supernatural was involved. Yet in the absolute providence of God we would give thanks to Him for the mercy of the healing, the benefits of which also extended to Paul.

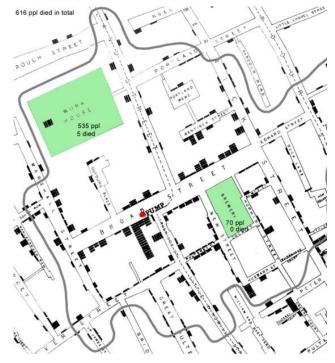
Timothy is afflicted with a chronic stomach problem. 1Ti 5:23 Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities. I imagine that in the Mediterranean heat, it was quite easy to pick up stomach infections but it would be pure speculation to say exactly what Timothy had. Perhaps the water was not good and therefore wine was a purer drink. The story of the cause of Cholera illustrated the benefits of drinking fermented alcohol rather than water.

Dr. John Snow is regarded as one of the founding fathers of modern epidemiology. The September 1854 cholera outbreak in London was centred in the Soho district, close to Snow's house. The symptoms that cholera patients presented also seemed to Snow to be inconsistent with exposure to a toxic gas. Often called "blue cholera" or "the blue death," because cholera usually caused death by respiratory failure, giving the skin a bluish tinge.

Snow mapped the 13 public wells and all the known cholera deaths around Soho in London, and noted the spatial clustering of cases around one particular water pump on the southwest corner of the intersection of Broad (now Broadwick) Street and Cambridge (now Lexington) Street. He examined water samples from various wells

under a microscope, and confirmed the presence of an unknown bacterium in the Broad Street samples. Despite strong scepticism from the local authorities, he had the pump handle removed from the Broad Street pump and the outbreak quickly subsided.

The workers at the brewery one block east of the Broad Street pump could drink all the beer they wanted; the fermentation killed the cholera bacteria, and none of the brewery workers contracted cholera. Many of the deaths further away from the Broad Street pump were people who walked to work or market on the Broad Street and drank from that well. The water from the Broad Street well reportedly



tasted better than water from most of the neighbouring wells, particularly the smelly

water from the Carnaby Street/Little Marlborough Street well a few blocks to the northeast.

Back in Paul's day, medicine was not advanced as today but there were remedies that worked. Perhaps it was Luke the "beloved physician" who suggested to Paul that Timothy take a little wine? Why though did Paul not heal the dear brother? He could have sent one of those "handkerchiefs" and why should distance be a problem to a healer? That leads me to another thought about healing and it is this, "does God heal chronic illnesses?" By that I mean, "Do long term illnesses that recur get healed?" Should we expect some permanence in healing that whatever we were healed of could never occur again?

If you had a stomach problem brought about by eating contaminated food and you were healed, could you expect that you could eat contaminated food in the future and not suffer ill effects? Does miraculous healing mean a permanent healing from any further attacks of a specific illness? Would Peter's mother have been healed of fever for life? Mat 8:14 And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever. Mat 8:15 And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them. I see no reason that physical healing is other than temporary. I think that Peter's mother could have succumbed to fever again in the future.

If you get influenza should you expect continuous miraculous healing? If you were healed and the virus mutates as it does, you could pick up another dose of 'flu because the system would be under attack from a totally new virus and it would be a new illness. Would it require a fresh miracle? If you had a chronic inflammation of the stomach, would it require a miracle or a change in diet? The healing does not require a miracle. Physical healing is but a temporary phenomenon of this life and we must agree also that healing does not confer immortality. Healing whether by natural medicines or miracles, merely stave off the inevitable for a brief period. Every one of those individuals healed in the New Testament would have eventually succumbed to death. In all probability, they would have died through some system failure of the body, from a disease. Very few people just die "naturally" without a disease. Healing is at best a temporary fix and we should not view it as "fairy dust" that makes everything permanently happy ever after. Healing is an extension of life at best.

Other seasonal illnesses and outbreaks of sickness, may have their origins in the nature of diet and hygene. They are the results of carelessness or ignorance in the way we live our lives *Deu 23:12 Set up a place outside the camp to be used as a toilet area. Deu 23:13 And make sure that you have a small shovel in your equipment. When you go out to the toilet area, use the shovel to dig a hole. Then, after you relieve yourself, bury the waste in the hole. Deu 23:14 You must keep your camp clean of filthy and disgusting things. The LORD is always present in your camp, ready to rescue you and give you victory over your enemies. But if he sees something disgusting in your camp, he may turn around and leave. CEV.*

The idea that "cleanliness is next to godliness" is well founded. Take this example from the life of Ignaz Philipp Semmelweis¹⁰:

Most doctors considered childbed fever (puerperal fever, an infection of the reproductive tract) unpreventable, but Semmelweis's tender heart was touched by the

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¹⁰ http://www.projectcreation.org/creation_station_detail.php?PRKey=13

screams and moans of the dying women, and he decided to put all his energies into finding the cause and cure of childbed fever. He spent hundreds of hours autopsying the bodies of dead patients. After several months, he noticed that the death rate in Ward One, where doctors and medical students were in charge, was around 29%, while the death rate in Ward Two, where midwives were in charge, was only 3%.

As an experiment, the midwives and doctors changed wards for awhile, and the same death rates followed each group. The final clue came when a colleague of Semmelweis's, Doctor Jakob Kolletschka, received a cut during the autopsy of a woman who had died of childbed fever. The cut became infected, and Doctor Kolletschka died in 1847 of puerperal infection. Semmelweis realized that something from the dead woman had infected his friend, and therefore something the medical students carried on their hands from one patient to another was causing the childbed fever. Doctors were carrying something from sick patients and dead bodies to healthy patients; men who were dedicated to healing were transmitting the disease themselves.

To Semmelweis, the solution became obvious. In May 1847, he ordered all doctors, students and midwives in the hospital to wash their hands thoroughly in chlorinated water before every examination or delivery. At the time, doctors usually washed their hands briefly after a delivery, but after an autopsy or examination of a pregnant woman, they would just wipe their hands off with a towel and go on to the next patient. When Semmelweis ordered the student doctors to wash their hands, many of them became outraged.

He had the authority, however, and under his new rule, the death rate from childbed fever dropped to below 1%. Some of the younger doctors realized that Semmelweis was right about handwashing, but the more established doctors disparaged his findings. Many deliberately disobeyed the order to wash their hands, calling it "undignified". Year after year Semmelweis provided clear proof that handwashing saved lives, and year after year he was ridiculed and criticized in scientific journals, and by leading obstetricians in Europe. He was eventually fired from his job at the hospital because of his insistence on handwashing, against the orders of his superior.

After years of attempting to persuade other physicians to follow his ideas, and knowing that thousands of women were dying needlessly every year, the strain proved too much for Semmelweis. He was admitted to a mental hospital in Vienna in August of 1865, after suffering a mental breakdown, and died on August 13, 1865, ironically of puerperal infection, from an infected cut on his right hand. The same disease he had fought all his life finally killed him.

Human ignorance is one of the biggest killers of humanity and we may ask whether over the Millennia we have lost more knowledge than we have gained, concerning how to live healthily. Do we expect the Lord to heal our lives when we neglect to live healthily? Do we expect for example miracle cures for obesity? If gluttonous people eat junk food like pigs, it is a self inflicted condition. Pro 23:2 Don't go and stuff yourself! That would be just the same as cutting your throat. CEV. In order to appease ourselves and shift the blame elsewhere, we have turned these behaviours into

addictions. Some would even say today that a person who has a food addiction that becomes an illness, is a victim¹¹. Is that true?

Addiction has very little in common with diseases. It is a group of behaviours, not an illness on its own. It cannot be explained by any disease process. Perhaps worst of all, calling addiction a "disease" interferes with exploring or accepting new understandings of the nature of addiction. This becomes clear if you compare addiction with true diseases. In addiction there is no infectious agent (as in tuberculosis), no pathological biological process (as in diabetes), and no biologically degenerative condition (as in Alzheimer's disease). The only "disease-like" aspect of addiction is that if people do not deal with it, their lives tend to get worse. That's true of lots of things in life that are not diseases; it doesn't tell us anything about the nature of the problem.

It is strange to observe that in the animal kingdom, obesity is very rare. What are the chances, for instance, of seeing a fat fox trotting out of the forest? Or a ferret with a beer gut? We humans do not get fat breathing air. We get fat because the calories we put in do not get used. That in turn leads to a host of other problems such as diabetes, heart disease, strokes and cancer. Do we honestly expect our God to cure us from the results of known and unhealthy lifestyles? In his documentary "Supersize me" Morgan Spurlock documented the results of living on MacDonalds all the time. Andrew Gumbel reviews the experiment:

A few days into his grand experiment of eating all McDonald's, all the time, for 30 days straight, the New York film-maker Morgan Spurlock started complaining of headaches and other unpleasant side-effects: listlessness, depression, chest pains, shortness of breath, sexual dysfunction and more.

Every night, audiences are confronted with the sight of Spurlock's alarmingly deteriorating health as he shovels one McDonald's meal into his mouth after another. He eats McDonald's for breakfast, lunch and dinner, vowing to try everything on the menu at least once in the course of his experiment, minimising his physical exercise (in keeping with the relative immobility of the average American) and agreeing that he will "super size" the portions he orders whenever the server suggests it to him (again, in accordance with the proclivities of regular fast-food customers).

For the final 15 minutes of the screening I attended earlier this week, film-goers revolted by the sight of one too many Egg McMuffins and super-sized side orders of fries were groaning and writhing in their seats. A food industry lobbyist who defended McDonald's was booed when he made the last of several appearances on screen.

By this point, Spurlock was being told by his doctors that his cholesterol was shooting off the charts, his liver was turning to pâté and he risked meeting the same terminally self-destructive fate as Nicolas Cage's alcoholic protagonist in Leaving Las Vegas. The damage was far beyond anything Spurlock's trio of specialists had imagined possible, and they begged him (in vain) to abandon his stunt.

https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-heart-addiction/201112/is-addiction-really-disease

Are miracles of healing to be squandered on people who care little for a healthy lifestyle? It is not as if, in these days, we do not know that certain things in excess can damage us. We do know and we choose not to act. If we are like this, I cannot see why we should invoke the supernatural to cure what is firmly within our grasp. The road to the cemetery may well be paved with big Mac's but it is a path many willingly tread.

Summary:

- 1. Healing was involved in planting churches
- 2. Not every sickness was healed miraculously
- 3. Not every sickness was healed
- 4. Healing does not mean that disease will not recur
- 5. Healing does not confer immortality merely an extension of life
- 6. Human ignorance plays a major part in disease control
- 7. Much sickness is related to environmental factors, such as water supplies or diet
- 8. Poor lifestyle choices have health consequences.

6. Healing the Soul

Let me summarise where we are in our study. We have considered the healings in the early church and we have seen in recent history that our Lord still does some remarkable works. Our study as it develops is all part of our process of building a larger picture of the subject of healing and what our Lord intended to show us by it. We still have a long way to go and we have not even put the outline on our canvas. Another aspect that we have not examined in detail are the types of illness and sickness that are healed, neither the reasons that these come upon us. We have made a distinction between self-inflicted illness (life style illness) and illness that may come about for other reasons, for example, congenital conditions but to what extent are these linked to our sinful nature? Can we look at any illness in isolation from the human condition and its alienation from its Creator? We shall examine this today.

Back in the 1980's the fear of HIV/AIDS prompted a media campaign that used images that suggested that it was like an iceberg, something mostly underwater, out of sight but a real and present danger. There was also the image of the 'Tombstone', the black monolith with AIDS written in capital letters and underlined, looking like something out of "2001 a space odyssey". By the middle of the decade, scientists were predicting that the cumulative total of UK HIV cases could reach 300,000 by 1992 if nothing were done. It took until 2012 for the cases to reach 100,000.



In the event HIV did not occur at the levels originally suggested but one thing that you may recall was that it was touted as a disease of homosexuality. The then Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police, James Anderton, referred to victims "swirling about in a human cesspit of their own making". Then of course heterosexuals began to develop its symptoms. It reminded me of a

man who observed the great Plague of London. He said at first people saw the unbelievers dying and then so did the Christians. Disease was not partial to a particular religion.

My point is that I do not see that you can ascribe the reason for any particular plague or death unless God Himself has told you the reason. You cannot say that the 1665 Plague was an act of judgement upon that generation. You can say that the plague of serpents that broke out in Israel was an act of God, Num 21:6 And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. Num 21:7 Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people.

David created a plague of his own choosing. 2Sa 24:10 And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the LORD, I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and now, I beseech thee, O LORD, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly.........2Sa 24:14 And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the LORD; for his mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand of man. 2Sa 24:15 So the LORD sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Beersheba seventy thousand men. 2Sa 24:16 And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD was by the threshingplace of Araunah the Jebusite. This is another example where we can state the cause. It was sin.

Sin related sickness and disease is not limited to the OT because the Lord still works judgement in the Church, 1Co 11:29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 1Co 11:30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. Again, we cannot be definitive about this either unless God tells us why we have sickness. It should concern us and we need to develop some introspection and dialogue with the Lord when we are sick. 1Co 11:31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. This opens up another line of enquiry as to why we might be sick, especially as Christians.

There is clearly and association drawn here between the physical state of the health of individuals in the Corinthian church and their attitude, which in this case is the way that they approached the Lord's table, the casual approach, treating the sacred meal with God like any ordinary meal. *1Co* 11:20 When you meet together, you don't really celebrate the Lord's Supper. 1Co 11:21 You even start eating before everyone gets to the meeting, and some of you go hungry, while others get drunk. 1Co 11:22 Don't you have homes where you can eat and drink? Do you hate God's church? Do you want to embarrass people who don't have anything? What can I say to you? I certainly cannot praise you. CEV.

The consequences of this behaviour brought them into condemnation and the condemnation manifests itself in sickness and in extreme cases death. What was wrong in their attitude, in their mind, in that unseen place, showed itself in their physical health. The unhealthy approach to the Lord's Supper was manifest in an unhealthy body. I know many Christians will be uncomfortable with this thought. Many will see themselves above all this, as if being a Christian for many years somehow

creates immunity to any spiritual malfunction. It is as if some Christians are just so right with God, that God would not do anything like this in their lives. They would never ever make the association between any wrong that they did with a sickness that they suffered. They are so righteous that they would not even enquire of God about it and they would treat sickness as one of life's natural hazards but definitely nothing to do with their spiritual condition. They catch a cold, get a stomach bug, they get ill but it never once occurs to ask the Lord if this is a result of a spiritual problem.

If the Lord inflicts sickness to warn us of our spiritual condition at the Lord's Table, why should we not expect it in other areas of our spiritual life? Sickness can be the voice of God talking to us. There are many other instances in the Scriptures where a physical condition is the result of a sinful action or attitude. As a was diseased in his feet, 2Ch 16:12 And Asa in the thirty and ninth year of his reign was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great: yet in his disease he sought not to the LORD, but to the physicians. As a did not seek to understand the association between his illness and the fact that he had put a prophet in the stocks. He sought after human solutions, by doctors rather than God. Miriam's leprosy is another example as is the transfer of Naaman's leprosy to the cheating servant of Elisha. In the Gospels we see physical healing associated with a warning, sin no more, Joh 5:14 Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.

There can be an association between our spiritual state and our physical health. This may not always be so but the case is strong enough such that we should treat it seriously. It appears that we can be physically sick because we are spiritually sick. By spiritually sick, I mean that there is a problem in our relationship with the Lord. The internal sickness manifests itself in the external sickness.

There is on the one hand our attitude, state or behaviour before God and on the other there are sicknesses which may or may not be related to that attitude. We need to discern between sinful behaviours and diseases that may or may not be a result of sinful behaviour. Joh 9:2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Joh 9:3 Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. The man was blind, not as a result of his sinful state or his parents sinful state but for another purpose. By the way it does not imply that the man or his parents were NOT sinners. Sin may bring about sickness but unless we understand the circumstances, sickness may have other purposes.

So when we are dealing with human behaviour we need to distinguish between what is a sinful disposition and an illness that is the consequence of that sinful disposition, and an illness that is not a direct consequence of sin. That said, when sin entered the world it brought death, Rom 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: So it must be that in the end, whatever disease carries us off is the final act of that original sin in our lives. Sin in the flesh must be laid in the grave and no healing here in this life can confer immortality.

Our sin and spiritual sickness manifests itself in many ways, such as thieving, fornicating, idolatry, effeminacy, homosexuality, covetousness, drunkenness and extortion to cite a few. These are not

physical sicknesses. They are sinful behaviours with lasting consequences if not dealt with. They are spiritual sicknesses and they may in turn lead to physical sicknesses.

That list of sinful behaviour can be extended far beyond those above. One person has created a list that contains 667¹² sins found in the Bible. Sins such as not abstaining from all appearance of evil, false accusing, failing to acknowledge sin, fear, unjustifiable anger, anxiety, arrogance, vain talking, backbiting, bitterness, divisiveness, violence, hatred, blasphemy, not blessing those that curse you, not bringing your children up in the Lord and so on. If we break the least command we are guilty of breaking all, Jas 2:10 If you obey every law except one, you are still guilty of breaking them all. CEV. There is no difference. I never read that there were distinctions between sins and that some were less important than others, like lies and "white" lies. Sin is sin, a lie is a lie and we are filthy in the sight of God if we have the slightest speck of sin on our lives.

You can see that the list that Paul generates in 1 Corinthians chapter 6 is incomplete. There are many more sins that exclude us from God's Kingdom. These sins are spiritual sicknesses from which we need deliverance and healing. A thief is spiritually sick, a homosexual is spiritually sick, just as a bitter person or a violent person is spiritually sick. A divisive person is just as sick as a murderer or an adulterer. If we were to stand where the Lord stands, I am sure that we would see that the spiritual healing and spiritual restoration far outweighs the need of healing in the flesh. I am not though suggesting that healing the flesh in unimportant. We might use the illustration, 1Ti 4:8 Training the body helps a little, but godly living helps in every way. Godly living has the promise of life now and in the world to come. Physical health is good but spiritual health is far more beneficial.

You will say to me that you have been forgiven, so how can I suggest that you are guilty of any of these 667 or so sins? You must understand that the forgiveness of sin does not remove the sinful nature from your life. If you have come to Christ for forgiveness, you need to see that your soul is to be healed also. Eph 4:21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: Eph 4:22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; Eph 4:23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; Eph 4:24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Eph 4:25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. Eph 4:26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

There are, as a consequence of forgiveness, things that we must remove from our lives. 1Th 4:2 For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. 1Th 4:3 For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: 1Th 4:4 That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; 1Th 4:5 Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God. This process of change is called sanctification. Rom 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

I will suggest that this is a healing process of our souls and spirits. Our Old man is dead Rom 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that

¹² http://www.amazingBible.org/Documents/Bible Studies/Sin list part 6.htm

henceforth we should not serve sin. That Old man is now replaced with a New man and with that a new mind and a new attitude. Eph 4:22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; Eph 4:23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; Eph 4:24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

If we go through life, dragging the corpse that we were, with us, we are not behaving as Christ would have us to behave. We must change. You cannot be a Christian if you are not "putting on the New man" and discarding the Old man. I hear people tell me that so and so is a Christian but you can see that the person has no interest at all in becoming a "New man". They want to be the Old man and at the same time, to continue in their old life, with no changes. I think that most people calling themselves "Christians" are in this position. They want other people to change but not themselves. They want a shallow religious feel good experience, just enough to keep the conscience quiet but not enough to make life changing decisions. The greatest proof of this assertion is that these people are Biblical ignoramuses. They do not study their Bibles, they do not know their Bibles, they spend time in other things and so they are not sanctified by God's word. Joh 17:17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.......Eph 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; Eph 5:26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

Peter gives us a graphic description of these people. 2Pe 2:21 They would have been better off if they had never known about the right way. Even after they knew what was right, they turned their backs on the holy commandments that they were given. 2Pe 2:22 What happened to them is just like the true saying, "A dog will come back to lick up its own vomit. A pig that has been washed will roll in the mud." CEV.

So I return to my earlier remark that we can be spiritually sick and that this may lead to physical sickness. More than that, every one of us needs healing from the ravages of sin that works in our soul and we all have a daily duty to work on that sinful nature and our mental renewal. Luk 9:23 And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. Luk 9:24 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. Every day we must die to self.

When I think back over my Christian life and recall the things that have been the subjects of interest and often the subjects of conflict and division, I cannot recall that sanctification was high on that list. I can remember hours of debate on predestination, human will and the nature and structure of the church. I cannot recall that sanctification or the dealing with "sin that so easily besets us" was top of that list. Heb 12:1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.

Why is sanctification not on the top of our agenda, top of our priorities? I can think of two reasons. Firstly we have a wrong view of sin and the way Christ deals with it. We assume incorrectly that forgiveness makes us sinless. Secondly, we do not want to want to deal with it, confess our faults and make necessary changes. The Gospel must change to fit our condition and not we to change and

conform to the Gospel. No, we have a need to workout our salvation, *Php 2:12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling*. Sickness can serve as a helpful reminder as to our duty before God.

Now if as I have suggested, the healing of the soul through the work of Christ, the spiritual healing is the most important healing, then why do we have physical healing? There are many reasons as we shall see. It is in the life and works of our Saviour Jesus that we get the best window through which to examine healing and what it means. It is written, *Mal 4:1 For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. Mal 4:2 But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. Mal 4:3 And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts.*

The image is of the Sun as a great bird lifting his wings and ascending into the sky. It is a day that burns hot as an oven. It is a day of judgement upon humanity. Yet under those wings is shelter and healing. Under those wings the people of God shall grow fat like calves in their stalls. *Mat 23:37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Mat 23:38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.*

We shall next try to understand what "healing" is meant in these Scriptures and what role healing played in the life of Jesus and His ministry.

Summary:

- 1. We cannot determine the hand of God in judgement and sickness unless He makes it known
- 2. Christians can become sick through sinful behaviour
- 3. There is an association between spiritual health and physical health in Scripture
- 4. There are a multitude of sins that beset us
- 5. Forgiveness must lead to sanctification
- 6. The Christian life is a life of renewal
- 7. The outward sickness reveals the nature of the inward sickness, namely sin
- 8. The effects of sin on our mortal body is not cured here because death is the result of sin
- 9. The Old nature is replaced now with the New man
- 10. The Old body will be replaced with a New body, raised incorruptible.

7. Signs of the Messiah

We shall now try to understand what "healing" is, why we have it in Scripture and what role healing played in the life of Jesus and His ministry. As we study the healings of Jesus our Saviour, we shall try and understand the context of these wonderful events. So, we begin at the beginning. In that dark night in Bethlehem, where the Shepherds were given a glimpse of the heavenly host and instructed

to visit the newborn Christ child. The birth of Jesus is associated with the darkness of night with the star guiding the wise men.

Isaiah points to this time, *Isa 9:2 The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined*. These words were reiterated by John the Baptist's father Zacharias when his tongue is loosened again, *Luk 1:77 To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, Luk 1:78 Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, Luk 1:79 To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.* Likewise when Simeon holds the Christ child he declares, *Luk 2:32 A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.*

The dawning (dayspring) of a new age, to give light to people in darkness and who sit in the shadow of death, a lamp for revelation to the gentiles. Death may cast a shadow but the light of Christ dissolves it completely. Son 4:6 Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense. Son 4:7 Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee. The condition of humanity is one of darkness and fear. Heb 2:14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; Heb 2:15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

What is that darkness that is spoken of? What is that inability to apprehend the light? It is the result of the fact that we are ALL born blind. We are blind to the things of God, 2Co 4:3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 2Co 4:4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. The lost remain blind.

The blind receive their sight. Luk 1:79 To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. Let us examine the start of Jesus' ministry, which is a ministry of deliverance, Heb 2:15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. Paul gives voice to this wretchedness, Rom 7:24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? Rom 7:25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Now it would not be unreasonable to expect that with these great prophecies we should see some proofs or signs and we do. They are in various forms. There are mighty works and there are signs. If I were to make a distinction between the two, it would be this. Mighty works (miracles or powers) are an exhibition of God's Creative power and Signs are an exhibition of a person, in this case the Messiah. Together they show the Creator/Messiah. It is really disappointing that many translations lack consistency. If you are using the AV, the word "sign" is often translated as "miracle" throughout John's Gospel. In Mark's gospel, the word "power" is translated "miracle" or "mighty work". Mar 9:38 And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbad him, because he followeth not us. Mar 9:39 But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. My advice is, whatever Bible you use, get a concordance and go through the words used for sign,

wonder, mighty work, miracle and correct the words to reflect what the original is saying (See our comments in Chapter 1).

John has a purpose in using the word "sign" for the works that Jesus does. It is to convince the reader, that is us, that Jesus is both the Messiah and the Son of God (coequal with God), the Creator/Messiah, so that we can be saved. Joh 20:30 And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: Joh 20:31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name. Within John's Gospel are seven signs that point to His Divinity. The Seven Signs are:

- 1. The turning of water into wine (John 2:1-12)
- 2. The healing of the royal official's son (John 4:46-54)
- 3. The healing of the paralytic at the Bethesda pool (John 5:1-17)
- 4. The feeding of the five thousand (John 6:1-14)
- 5. The walking on water (John 6:15-25)
- 6. The healing of the man born blind (John 9:1-41)
- 7. The raising of Lazarus (John 11:1-46)

The first sign that Jesus performs is at a marriage in Cana of Galilee. Signs as we have seen, have a purpose. They manifest the credibility of individuals and they make a statement, Exo 4:7 And he said, Put thine hand into thy bosom again. And he put his hand into his bosom again; and plucked it out of his bosom, and, behold, it was turned again as his other flesh. Exo 4:8 And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign. Signs speak and they have a voice. They also bring to remembrance issues of importance, Deu 11:18 Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes.

At Cana of Galilee, Jesus was making a statement or perhaps at the time, an understatement? It is a very select gathering in a small town. We might ask why He did not go to the Temple and turn the water in the Sacred Laver in the Temple into wine? That would have got people's attention. Lots of attention. Besides, the event at Cana would not really gain great notoriety until John published his Gospel, so it is more for later generations like us. To understand the sign at Cana, we need to see it in the context of the Gospel and John's purpose for writing the Gospel. Proof that Jesus is the Creator/Messiah.

The sign at Cana is a declaration of who Jesus is. It is an unusual series of events that brings this about. It involves 6 stone water pots, a wedding and the transformation of water into wine. What would you have chosen as the first sign if it had been in your power? Something far more spectacular, far more attention grabbing? Perhaps a display of Angels over the Temple, turning the streets to Gold, emptying the graveyards? This is not a fairy tale of Aladdin and magic for the sake of entertaining selfish men. This is something different and to understand it, I think that we should look for analogues, things that we might compare the sign at Cana with.

We should not think that the importance of a sign lies in how spectacular the sign is. The importance lies in what it signifies what it says, what it gives voice to. We will consider:

- The transformation of water to wine
- The marriage

The fruit of the vine is the emblem of the blood of Christ, *Luk 22:20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.* It becomes the memorial of the death of Christ, *1Co 11:26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.* The wine is symbolic of the New Covenant sealed by the death of Christ. It is also in this blood that we are washed from our sins, *Rev 1:5 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.* Those six stone water pots for the purification of the Jews only washed the outside of the body, but when it becomes the blood of Christ it washes the inward parts. The transformation of water to wine suggests a deeper miracle of cleansing.

The transformation of water into wine, the blood of the grape, may suggest another great sign known to Israel. It too was the first sign of the plagues of Egypt, Exo 7:19 And the LORD spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and stretch out thine hand upon the waters of Egypt, upon their streams, upon their rivers, and upon their ponds, and upon all their pools of water, that they may become blood; and that there may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood, and in vessels of stone. There in Egypt was found a transformation of water into blood and that in stone pots also in a symbol.

The context of the sign of the first plague on Egypt is also of importance. It is the first in the series that led to the Exodus from Egypt. We have suggested elsewhere that this was the subject that Jesus talked about to Moses and Elijah on the mount of transfiguration. Luk 9:30 And, behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah. Luk 9:31 Appearing in glory, they spoke of His exodus, which He was about to accomplish in Jerusalem. LITV. This deliverance by Jesus was from the law and sin, Gal 4:24 Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. Gal 4:25 For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. Gal 4:26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. The Sinaitic covenant did not bring life but engendered death but Christ delivers us to life.

The blood of Christ works in two ways. It can work in forgiveness and sanctification, 1Jn 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. It can also work in judgement to those who despise it, Heb 10:28 He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Heb 10:29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? The transformation of the water to wine at Cana has two sides to it and it is a sign no less great than the one performed by Moses in Egypt. It can be a symbol of life (the life is in the blood) or it can be judgement. Taking it unworthily brings judgement.

There is one further thing and it is that this sign appears at a wedding. In this it prefigures the greatest wedding ever, Rev 19:7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. Rev 19:8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. We also get an explanation of the dialogue with Mary, His mother if we bear this thought in mind. Joh 2:3 And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. Joh 2:4 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.

The same words are used in the dialogue with the demonic, Mar 5:7 And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not. To which Matthew adds, Mat 8:29 And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time? What is it to do with you Jesus, our time is not yet come? What is it to do with you Mary my hour is not come? When Jesus talks to Mary, Is He looking at another scene, another hour, another time. Mary looks at the wedding in Cana, Jesus looks to His wedding in Glory. When He speaks I suggest that it is of the marriage in heaven, the hour of which has not yet come? He says these words not in rebuke to Mary, not out of harshness but as a reflection of His thoughts on the future, in the fullness of the Kingdom of God, of which this marriage at Cana is but a shadow. Luk 22:18 For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the Kingdom of God shall come.

The first sign in Cana sets the scene for the deliverance of Israel. It has meaning. I believe that all the works that Jesus does are connected with His Person and Works, that all have meaning. I do not see that Jesus entered this world as a type of "faith Healer" although He did heal. With the power Jesus possessed, He could have healed everyone with a single word. He could have rid the world of sickness and death but He did not. Yet He performs healings with purpose and the next sign that John records, after Jesus came out of Judah into Galilee is a healing.

A definition of healing: We have not defined healing and no doubt you have your own idea as to what it is. It is broadly speaking, making someone better. Specifically, it is restoring the function of a part that has malfunctioned, for example the eye, the leg, the hand, the tongue and so forth. In that respect it is quite specific. It is like replacing a damaged component when you get your PC repaired. The other components are left unchanged and they will continue to run until they too in turn fail. It is not a complete refurbishment, resetting life's clocks, restoring youth. I do not read that in the process of healing a person's hair changed back to the colour of their youth, that they lost their wrinkles or that every part of their body underwent a restoration. Being healed of one malady does not mean that you are healed of ALL maladies. I do not see that Jesus healed the aging process or regarded it as a disease, indeed our Lord Himself was subject to the aging process as he grew from a babe to a man. It is a process of maturation which has gone wrong for most of us.

As I have suggested already, disease will in all likelihood carry us away. The fact that we live longer on average, today, means that we are more likely to get the diseases of old age (cancers, heart problems and so on). If we get past some diseases, there are others waiting for us. If we liken the miracles of healing to an event on life's road, it may be that that the Lion that gripped you early on your journey of life was killed but that does not mean that another one will not get you around the corner later in your journey of life. I recall that two people, a man and a woman, who survived 911,

when the World Trade centre was destroyed, were travelling to the Dominican Republic on American Airlines flight 587 two months later. The plane crashed killing 260 people, in the same city where the twin towers were raised. That just about sums up the uncertainty of life. Healing reverses nothing on the road, repairs something but does not repair everything permanently. Our expectations of healing must be tempered by reality. Christianity needs to have a real world view not some fantasy world view where healing makes everything permanently nice, an oasis of goodness, in the here and now. Again I say, the life to come is the only place where everything is set right and healthy.

I have often wondered about what happened to the people who were healed by Jesus. What did the blind man who was healed die of? Did he die with perfect eyesight of some other disease? How did the leper die, or the man possessed at Gadara, or the paralytic? More importantly, did they all die in the faith? Did the Centurion in Capernaum who had his servant healed have to kill the ruler's son, who was also healed, many years later, during the Jewish rebellion?

Jesus' second sign also occurs at Cana, to a ruler and nobleman who would have known Jesus in Capernaum because He had ministered in the synagogue there. The shadow of death has been cast over the home of a ruler in that town. Why his house and not another's is not for us to know but the shadow of death is cast over all of us eventually? It was in human terms unfair to this man and had it been someone older in his household, he would have probably let life run its course. We expect old people to die but not those in the bloom of youth. He would not have troubled Jesus I am sure if it was an old person. But it is his child and for the love of the child he will do anything.

In the face of these circumstances, Jesus' words seem unduly harsh. Joh 4:47 When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judaea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death. Joh 4:48 Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe. Joh 4:49 The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die. Joh 4:50 Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way. You may recall that we compared the approach of this nobleman to the centurion in Capernaum (see The Hard sayings of Jesus). The centurion had faith that was unseen in Israel. This nobleman, presumably an Israelite seems to lack that faith. Is that really so? How quick we are to condemn him in his grief.

Yet if the ruler did not believe in Jesus, why make the journey to seek healing? Is it desperation or is he acting this out for those to come? The words "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe" were not just for this poor man, they were for all Jews and they have come down to us also. Jesus speaks to us looking over the shoulder of this ruler. He speaks to every generation. Can we trust the Lord our Saviour because of who He says He is or must we see signs before we believe? Even with those signs, many still refused to believe, Joh 12:37 But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: Joh 12:38 That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Joh 12:39 Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, Joh 12:40 He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. Joh 12:41 These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him. As Isaiah looked upon Christ's glory, he

saw that many had been blinded to the truth. *Isa 60:1 Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.* That **ruler** is typical of his generation and many generations since. I was there myself once. Prove yourself and I will believe you, said I to the Creator! How arrogant and wicked as if I could expect the Creator to come at my bidding to do what I wanted.

What was the sign and who saw it? Where was the sign shown? It is a sign that we do not need signs. The father never saw the son healed and all that we know of it is the report of the ruler's servants. We see it through the eyes of the servants. Joh 4:51 And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth. And again, Joh 20:29 blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

There are times in Jesus' ministry when He seems very hard on people and other times quite gentle and He weeps and is moved with great compassion. All the while His path through this life is governed by the will of His Father and step by step fulfils the words of the Prophets of old. How are we to understand Jesus and especially His approach to healing?

I was brought up in Sunday Schools with the idea that Jesus came to make us "good",

He died that we might be forgiv'n, He died to make us good, That we might go at last to Heav'n, Saved by His precious blood.

It was not said that I needed to repent and be converted, rather, it was that by some process of copying Jesus that I would be made "good". I think that I am not alone in understanding that was the teaching then. Jesus had become a standard for us to imitate and we "try His works to do" but, do we understand what we are doing and do we have the mind of Jesus that went with all of His works?

If we are to understand healing, we need to understand it from Jesus' perspective and that raises a big question. Did Jesus work from a perspective of unconditional love or indiscriminate love? Was that the driving force behind how He used His powers of healing? God willing, we shall next try to understand this popular modern idea.

8. The devil's lie: "God's love is unconditional"

You may be wondering what this ministry today has to do with healing. It is this, namely that our attitude to humanity, our fellow human beings, will affect how we would use the gift of healing towards them. Since the world has not been cured of its diseases and sicknesses, it is quite clear that it is not God's intention to miraculously physically heal the whole world (certainly up to now) and that where the gift of healing exists, it is of limited effect. What should our attitude be to our fellow man and how is that reflected in how we help him and heal him? Are we obligated as believers to physically heal humanity? I know people who would, if they had the power.

What was Jesus' attitude to humanity? How does that apply to us and how should we act? This is our subject today. One of the great lies of the age is that God's love is unconditional. It is an idea that

supposes God is under some obligation to do good to everyone on the planet. I read in a so called 'devotional' recently that the greatest need of a child is unconditional love. I also read that ¹³,

"Unconditional love is the acceptance of a person without him or her meeting any conditions. In other words, it means having affection for someone without establishing limitations. So, unconditional love means loving someone irrespective of that person's behaviour".

Also,

"Now, to a certain extent God loves all people unconditionally even though they break his laws. For instance, he provides food to eat and water to drink for both sinner and saint. Jesus taught his disciples to "love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" because God "makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous" Mat 5:44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; Mat 5:45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. Mat 5:46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?"

I will dismiss the notion, that the fact that 'the sun rises on the evil and the good', should be interpreted as a sign of God's favour to evil men. Neither when good men die with bad men, does it mean that they will end up in the same place. Wheat and Tares grow together and both benefit from the sun. It is no proof of favour. You cannot discern the condition of any man in relationship to God by providence. What you are being shown is that God does not discriminate when it comes to the care of His creatures. It is a mark of both common grace and common curse. It says nothing about whether an individual is going to be saved or not. In this sense we cannot say that God will or will not save that unjust person merely because he shares the sunshine with good people. What it does mean is that we are not to discriminate between people who will do us good and those who will harm us, because we have duties to both.

It is of course pointless to argue about love until we have defined it. While we all use this word "love", I am quite sure that we all have different perceptions as to what that love involves. As Christians, our definition must be firmly rooted in the Word of God. Yet we Christians have a tendency to synthesise our definitions from human experience and then apply that to the interpretation of the Bible. Is the Bible the standard for our definitions? We might think that giving presents, cuddles, being all round nice people, extreme "do gooders" makes us loving people. Is that true?

I want to start with the Scripture that we are often challenged by. "Love your neighbour as yourself" and it is found only once in the Older Testament in the book of Leviticus. Lev 19:18 Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but **thou shalt love thy neighbour** ($\nu = r\hat{e}ya = associate$, brother, companion, fellow) **as thyself**: I am the LORD. The verse nestles in a passage which starts by dealing with "**Holiness**", Lev 19:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

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¹³ http://www.patheos.com/blogs/kermitzarleyblog/2013/05/is-unconditional-love-a-biblical-concept/

Lev 19:2 Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy. The passage continues by telling the children of Israel how they should behave to one another.

I emphasise that the passage is directed to the Israelites alone, the covenant people and not the gentiles. It already has its limitations. The attitude towards the gentiles seems far from neighbourly if we are to use the verse in its modern and unlimited application. The neighbouring Nations were to be exterminated. Deu 7:1 When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; Deu 7:2 And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: Deu 7:3 Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. Deu 7:4 For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly. Deu 7:5 But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire. Deu 7:6 For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. This is genocide to the enemies of God and so neighbourliness had its boundaries.

With few exceptions in the OT (e.g. Naaman, the Canaanite woman), the attitude to the gentiles was that they were adversaries to the faith, although they could enter the nation as proselytes provided that they were subject to the rituals of the nation (circumcision, etc).

Neighbourly duties are clearly confined to the Israelites and between the Israelites. Lev 19:11 "Never steal, lie, or deceive your neighbour. Lev 19:12 "Never swear by my name in order to deceive anyone. This dishonours the name of your God. I am the LORD. Lev 19:13 "Never oppress or rob your neighbour. Never keep the pay you owe a hired worker overnight. Lev 19:14 Never curse deaf people or put anything in the way of blind people to make them stumble. Instead, fear your God. I am the LORD. Lev 19:15 "Don't be corrupt when administering justice. Never give special favours to poor people, and never show preference to important people. Judge your neighbour fairly. Lev 19:16 Never gossip. Never endanger your neighbour's life. I am the LORD. Lev 19:17 "Never hate another Israelite. Be sure to correct your neighbour so that you will not be guilty of sinning along with him. Lev 19:18 Never get revenge. Never hold a grudge against any of your people. Instead, love your neighbour as you love yourself. I am the LORD. GW. The application of these duties of the law make for peace within the Nation.

Lev 19:16 "You are not to go around slandering your people. "You are not to stand idle when your neighbour's life is at stake. I am the LORD. ISV. The Jewish writers think¹⁴, that a man by this law, is bound to do all he can to preserve the life of his neighbour, when it is by any means in danger, by drowning, or by thieves and wild beasts. Perhaps this is what Jesus had in mind when he spoke to the lawyer about neighbours?

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¹⁴ Quoted in Dr Gill.

Luk 10:26 He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? Luk 10:27 And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. Luk 10:28 And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. Luk 10:29 But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?...... Luk 10:36 Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? Luk 10:37 And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

I hope that you read that carefully. It is not a story about defining love it is about defining who is a neighbour. The neighbour was **NOT** the man who fell among thieves. The neighbour was the Samaritan who helped him. The Samaritan was being neighbourly by showing mercy to the stricken traveller. You will also see that it was an act of compassion. Luk 10:33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him. So in order to illustrate the second great command, "Love thy neighbour", we see that the neighbour is the one who gives the help by being compassionate and it is shown as an act of mercy (favour to one who does not necessarily deserve it). It doesn't say "because the Samaritan loved him", it does say that he "had compassion".

I wonder what nationality the wounded man was? I would guess that he was a Jew. It would have made more sense in the context because there would have been a greater empathy for a Jew among the audience, one of their own nation. It also makes the point better when two people of the religious cast, the Levite and the Priest, pass him by and it is left to one of another race to help the Jew. It emphasises the point that the people who should have been neighbours, fellow Jews, failed entirely. If we update this, we must ask whether we Christians are neighbours to fellow Christians? Eph 4:25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for WE are members one of another. It could not be stated more clearly. Our neighbour is one who is joined to us and that cannot be an unbeliever. Your neighbours are those in the faith not those outside of the faith. Your neighbours are as they were in the OT, believers.

Now in your mind, you probably think that love is giving people what they like but that is far from the case. It is more about giving people what they need. The neighbourly Samaritan met the need of the traveller. If the traveller had been lying drunk and requesting a few more cans of beer, I think that the response would have been quite different and a stay at the Inn certainly off limits. We also do not know if the traveller was Jewish or gentile but that is not the point of the story. It is a challenge to OUR neighbourliness.

I must also point out that Jesus ministry is with a few exceptions, entirely focused upon the nation of Israel, the Jews. Apart from the Syrophoenicean woman and the Centurion (who may have been a proselyte). He was a neighbour firstly to His own people. *Mat 15:24 But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel*. *Mat 15:25 Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. Mat 15:26 But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. Mat 15:27 And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Mat 15:28 Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour. Likewise the disciples during this period do not go to the gentiles. <i>Mat 10:5 These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any*

city of the Samaritans enter ye not: Mat 10:6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Mat 10:7 And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. If neighbourliness was spreading the good news of the kingdom to all men, then it clearly did not function in those days.

The neighbour under the law, was someone whose life needed preserving and that is a function of the law. Lev 18:5 Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the LORD. Lev 18:5 Live by my standards, and obey my rules. You will have life through them. I am the LORD. GW. Loving your neighbour is doing what is right to your neighbour.

In the context of Leviticus chapter 19, we can extract some of the neighbourly duties of love:

- Not stealing from each other
- Not stealing his wife
- Not lying to one another
- Not profaning the Name of God (swearing in front of them)
- Not defrauding
- Not robbing
- Not cursing the deaf (saying things when people cannot hear you)
- Not stumbling the blind (tripping up the unwary)
- Being honest in judgement
- Not a talebearer
- Not standing idle when they are in trouble
- Not hating
- Correcting him
- Not vengeful
- Not a grudge bearer

I will suggest that these things are a practical application of the law of God in one's own life and towards one's neighbour. The second great command to love your neighbour is shown by the application of all these (above) laws. Love is the application of the law. It follows that by not applying the law you are being unloving or hateful to your neighbour. If you really love yourself you will make every effort to secure eternal salvation with God. If you love your neighbour as yourself, you will want the same for him also.

If you love your neighbour, you will also be involved in sanctions against the neighbour if he breached the law. The ultimate sanction was death. Lev 19:17 Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him. That could be extreme, where the community was put at risk through the behaviour of an individual. Deu 21:18 If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them: Deu 21:19 Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; Deu 21:20 And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard. Deu 21:21 And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear. The parents were good neighbours, their son was evil and incorrigible, so to protect their neighbours the son had to be removed from society. The love of the many

neighbours outweighed any feelings for the individual. Eli's sons were sons of Belial and he failed to correct them. God took things in hand and killed them both.

If a man became "overly" neighbourly to his neighbours wife, it too was sanctioned, *Lev 20:10 And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death*. Helping yourself to your neighbour's wife or his property was un-neighbourly and was punished. This again confirms that neighbourliness has boundaries when it comes to personal freedoms. It would also have been extremely un-neighbourly to have let the neighbours wander down the road to hell, without warning them of their danger. Strong language was needed. It says something about our carelessness and lack of concern for our brethren, that we do not use strong language or rebuke in the face of sin in the church. We are more concerned about upsetting them or being politically correct than delivering them from evil. If the believers cannot speak truth to themselves, how will they speak truth to the unbelievers? In this they are not good neighbours.

How did Jesus love his Jewish neighbours? Let us examine some of the things that Jesus says to His neighbours. *Mat 23:29 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, Mat 23:30 And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Mat 23:31 Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Mat 23:32 Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Mat 23:33 Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?*

I believe that Jesus acted out of love. Lev 19:17 Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: **thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour**, and not suffer sin upon him. He openly rebuked the people of His day, the Israelites, His neighbours, because he loved them and knew what would happen to them if they did not change. This is the basis of law, it reveals sin, it convicts but Christ delivers. This is showing them that God's love is conditional. It is conditional upon their lives changing, otherwise it will result in everlasting separation.

I do not see this love shown either in churches or in the homes of most Christians. The aim is not to upset the church or upset your family because that, in their eyes, means that you are unloving. Your love must be unconditional, as some say, "love the sinner but not the sin" (from a saying by Augustine). Yet that is not a statement derived from Scripture. We are to show mercy, *Jud 1:22 And of some have compassion (mercy), making a difference: Jud 1:23 And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.* The sin and the sinner are one and the same. Inseparable.

I am not saying that we should hate the sinner, be vindictive, spiteful or neglecting of them. However, you cannot separate sin from the sinner. The sin is what makes a man a sinner. Sin is an attitude of unrighteousness and it is this that marks a sinner, they are inseparable. What are you going to do for the sinner? Let him continue to wallow in the mire? There goes the devil, whispering in your ear, do not push your faith, do not speak about Jesus, do not upset your church or family, just "love them". Just give them anything they want, indulge their lives, their false ideas and beliefs, feed their wants because that is loving them, you are told. Yes, love them by denying them the very things that will deliver their eternal soul. There is only one person who has a vested interest in unconditional love and that is the devil himself.

If you say that you love the sinner, then it should follow that you want to get him to change. *Jas 5:19 Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Jas 5:20 Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.* Just continuing in an idle association, saying nothing, just confirms the person in their sin. Why? Well, they must be alright because you said nothing about it.

Let me push this point further by asking you this. Who is your enemy? You are supposed to love your enemies. You may have thought that your enemy was someone who did bad things to you, abused you, reviled you, persecute you and curse you. Some enemies do this to you but not all enemies do this. Every person who has not accepted Christ is an enemy. Rom 5:10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. God's enemies are our enemies too. We were like that once when we were unbelievers.

Our own families who are unbelievers are our enemies. I know this well enough because I see it in the attitude of my own relatives and their attitude to me. It is as the Lord has said it would be. The idea that we should make special allowances for our closest genetic relations, because they are family, is also a false idea. Mat 10:36 A person's enemies will be the members of his own family. Mat 10:37 The person who loves his father or mother more than me does not deserve to be my disciple. The person who loves a son or daughter more than me does not deserve to be my disciple. GW. The love for our God masters all else in our lives, otherwise we can make no claim to discipleship.

Our enemies are everyone who is outside of Christ. Every single unbeliever is an enemy, by definition. Every person we know, every family member who rejects Christ in their lives is your enemy. They are hostile to our Saviour and to us. If you do not believe me, you start to make a stand on the Gospel and speak on Christ to them at every occasion and see their reaction. They will show their displeasure. So how are we going to love them? Do we really see that difference between us and them? God does. And so should we.

I shall close here by saying that unconditional love is a lie of the devil and if you believe that lie you will do your neighbour more harm than good. Further if you think that your neighbour will pick up good intentions through osmosis or silent witness you have missed the point. Do you really think that is loving your neighbour and that silence is the way of Christ? If you do, you are tip toeing around the issues, you are passing by on the other side of the road and leaving them to die unaided.

9. The limits of compassion

I have suggested that Biblical love is neither silent nor neglectful of its duty to a neighbour, whether that "neighbour" is a member of your genetic family or not. I have also suggested that "neighbours" in the biblical sense are not the people who live next door to you, unless they are believers, neighbours are of the household of faith, Christians. I have further suggested that biblical love brings with it certain obligations. So when you and I talk about love, are we talking about the same thing? I know people who call themselves Christians and they would be most offended if you questioned their love for other believers. Yet these self same people do not encourage godliness, faithfulness, uprightness, truthfulness to Christ in the people that they say that they love. They are

strangely silent over these traits. Love to them means letting people go their own way and not challenging their faith, covering up a multitude of sins. By covering they mean live and let live but that is not meant in the Bible.

I cannot pass on this without observing that the passage dealing with "covering sins" does not mean covering up sinful behaviour without dealing with it before God and man. The verse sets the attitude of love against the attitude of hatred. *Pro 10:12 Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins*. Hatred wallows in contention. It will not let matters rest but rather hatred stirs up the situation even if the sin is long past, dealt with and gone. I emphasise that it should have been dealt with otherwise it remains a problem. But if it is dealt with and someone raises the matter again, then because it is dealt with, love will not expose it, it will keep it covered. That is the grace towards the sinner that God shows to us in forgiveness. He no longer remembers our sins. *Psa 130:3 If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?* That is love covering sin.

Do you recall Jesus words to Peter? Joh 21:15 So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest ($\dot{\alpha}\gamma\alpha\pi\dot{\alpha}\omega$ = agapaō) thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love ($\varphi\iota\lambda\dot{\epsilon}\omega$ = phileō) thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. Joh 21:16 He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest ($\dot{\alpha}\gamma\alpha\pi\dot{\alpha}\omega$ = agapaō) thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. Joh 21:17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest ($\varphi\iota\lambda\dot{\epsilon}\omega$ = phileō) thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest ($\varphi\iota\lambda\dot{\epsilon}\omega$ = phileō) thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love ($\varphi\iota\lambda\dot{\epsilon}\omega$ = phileō) thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

It was in part, because of these verses that I started to study New Testament Greek. I found that the "love" Jesus questioned in Peter was a different "love" to the one Peter had in mind. One word refers to what I shall call that higher love that God requests for Himself and our neighbour, the other is more affection, and as such has been translated as a "kiss" in; *Mat 26:48 Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss* ($\varphi\iota\lambda\dot{\epsilon}\omega$ = $phile\bar{o}$), that same is he: hold him fast. One is the love ($\dot{\alpha}\gamma\alpha\pi\dot{\alpha}\omega$ = $agapa\bar{o}$) that we associate with duty and the other is the love ($\varphi\iota\lambda\dot{\epsilon}\omega$ = $phile\bar{o}$), we associate with friendship. Many can aspire to affection and less to duty. Do you notice that Jesus does not pursue the matter with Peter and leaves it at "affection", brotherly love, Philadelphia?

Since "ALL" Scripture is inspired, this inspired statement must mean something. Why use two different words if they have the same meaning? Perhaps because "love" in not encapsulated in one word. It covers a spectrum of attitudes.

The conditional love of God is seen in the discussion with Nicodemus. Joh 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Joh 3:17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. Joh 3:18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. Quite clearly, God's love to the world stops short when people reject His Son and His Salvation. That is not unconditional love. To continue in that state of rejection is to continue

in the state of condemnation. The love of God is therefore conditional. Some people think that they can do better than God and be more loving than God by dishing out unconditional love.

Perhaps one of the most misquoted texts of Scripture is the one in which Jesus says of acts of love, "you did it unto me". The scene is set on the great day of judgement. The works that men did are laid bare before the Christ. The things that people did for Christ are revealed. *Mat 25:34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: Mat 25:35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Mat 25:36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Although Jesus was not always in plain sight there were those who would receive blessings on His behalf. They were His people in prison, His people in poverty, His people in need and when they received help it was as if they were wearing the mantle of Christ, taking it on behalf of Christ.*

Now could we say for example, that visiting an unrepentant murderous rapist in a prison was an act of visiting Christ? How could we identify Christ in such a person who fights against all Christ stands for? Many people incorrectly think that all good works to mankind are works to Christ. They appeal to Matthew chapter 24 and suggest that any good deed is a deed to Christ. That is not what we are taught. Mat 25:40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. It does not say because you have done it to all mankind you did it to me.

Unfortunately, the term brother has come to mean any other human being these days. "Am I not a man and a brother" stated the antislavery poster. No you are not, I say, unless you are in the family of Christ. The biblical brother is different from the world's brother. Mat 12:47 Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. Mat 12:48 But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? Mat 12:49 And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! Mat 12:50 For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

When Jesus says that things were done to "the least of these my brethren", He did not mean humanity as a whole. He had in mind Christians. If people think that when they do charitable works to unbelievers that they are doing it to Christ, they are mistaken. Do not fool yourself into thinking that you are doing things to Christ, if you are not doing them for His people. By all means give and be generous but do not think that giving to unbelievers is giving to God. But more than that, what will we say to Christ when He asks us what we did with His resources? How will we explain that we were more generous to the world than to His children, that we gave more to the unbeliever and neglected our brothers and sisters? How will we answer? Should we leave our inheritance to unbelievers and unbelieving children rather than Christians? I have made a choice that I will not leave anything to the unbeliever.

So what should we give to? Even Our Lord does not tell us what to give to, other than that, He loves a cheerful giver. He punishes mean and deceitful givers (Ananias and Sapphira). Gal 6:9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. Gal 6:10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. We need to think carefully as to what that good is.

The saints should be at the top of our giving list. 1Co 16:1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. 1Co 16:2 Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. Giving was not a 'lastminute.com' thought, pass the hat around when the Apostle arrives, it was a considered issue outside of meetings. By the way, I do not think that Christians should fund their work from unbeliever's contributions. Only those who have been united with Christ and His church by personal faith in Jesus Christ should give to the people of God and the work of God. In the Bible, every command or exhortation to give, is addressed to believers not unbelievers. 3Jn 1:6 They have told the church about your love. They say you were good enough to welcome them and to send them on their mission in a way that God's servants deserve.3Jn 1:7 When they left to tell others about the Lord, they decided not to accept help from anyone who wasn't a follower.......2Co 6:14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? 2Co 6:15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

Should we give to every "chugger" that rattles a tin in front of us? Should we give to Dog's homes, abandoned donkeys, Oxfam, NSPCC, Red Cross, Trussell Trust, Red Nose day or whatever? It is your choice. Yet I must emphasise again that our first duty is to our brothers and sisters in need and whatever we have is not ours but loaned by the Lord. How will I answer to God for my neglect of His people not just because I was mean but because I did more for the unbeliever? I will no doubt be unpopular and called "unloving" but I do not see that the church has been tasked to rehabilitate the unbelieving world with charity shops. The world has brought its own misery upon itself because it has rejected Christ and made its own rules for life. Redemption does not come through a food bank.

When the prophet Agabus was warned about a famine, he did not set up a worldly institution, the Red Cross of his day, to cater for the unbelievers, *Act 11:28 And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. Act 11:29 Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea:* Act 11:30 Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul. The Christians took care of the believers. The unbelievers will take care of their own.

I think that we have lost sight of the great divide between those who believe and those who do not believe. We are not the same. We have been called out, called Saints, a peculiar people, a Royal Priesthood, a chosen generation a people fit for God. However, because many so called "Christians" live lives that differ little from those who are unbelievers, they see them as the same as themselves. In their minds the difference between the two is that one group think that they are believers and the other group do not but apart from that they are the same. Well, pick up your Bible and read it again.

There is, I believe, a discipline in the way that we must do things as Christians, because we are not of the world. The way that we should apply the gifts of God must also be disciplined, just as they were in the life of Jesus. We need to understand that Jesus acted under the direction of His Father, Joh 8:28 Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. Joh 8:29 And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him. Now when we do those things is it loving and pleasing God? Jesus did not heal the world

or feed the world. There was method in His ministry as there should be in ours. Love is disciplined and love is not unconditional.

In order to illustrate this better, let us make a further distinction. I think that many confuse love with compassion. When some say that they are loving, they are in fact being compassionate. Compassion is also an attribute of God, Rom 9:15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. There you will see that mercy and compassion are separated. It is an act of mercy that delivers us from judgement, an act for which we can only beg as we are undeserving creatures. Mercy is in the hand of the giver and it is not always delivered and not all cries for mercy are heeded, Luk 16:24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

Compassion is an emotion felt in the depths of our being. The word compassion (Σπλαγχνίζομαι = splagchnizomai) is derived from its association with our visceral organs, our internal organs. I will define it as a gut feeling or an emotional response. It is a feeling of pity, sorrow, kindness and all of those feelings that come about for someone less fortunate or vulnerable. I think that it differs from mercy in this respect. **Mercy is the deed and compassion is the emotion** or feeling that can accompany it. Whereas you might be unfeelingly merciful, compassion is the gut feeling generated in you towards another. I think that we can be merciful without being emotional or compassionate

The master had compassion on his servant and let him go debt free. Mat 18:26 The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Mat 18:27 Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion $(\sigma\pi\lambda\alpha\gamma\chi\nu(\zeta_0\mu\alpha\iota=splagchnizom)$, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. That compassion evaporated when the master did not see it reciprocated. Mat 18:33 Shouldest not thou also have had compassion ($\dot{\epsilon}\lambda\dot{\epsilon}\dot{\epsilon}\omega=elee\bar{o}=mercy$) on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity ($\dot{\epsilon}\lambda\dot{\epsilon}\dot{\epsilon}\omega=eleeo=mercy$) on thee? Better, Mat 18:33 Was it not right for you to have mercy on the other servant, even as I had mercy on you? BBE. Compassion has its limits and can turn into compassion fatigue when it fails to produce a response. You may feel compassion for some down and out and so you help them. Later on you see that being down and out is a lifestyle choice. They do not want to be anything other than a down and out. That is when your compassion takes a hit and begins to decline. What is there to be sad or sorrowful about, it's the way the person wants to be.

I mentioned previously the story of the good Samaritan. If it was a different situation and a man not beaten up by robbers but a man apparently out of work and begging, he might still have had compassion and helped him. If one day, he saw the same man in an expensive restaurant, eating well, because begging was a lifestyle choice, the Samaritan would have reviewed his act of giving to the beggar. If he didn't he might acquire the title the "mug Samaritan".

Compassion towards those who call themselves Christians can also fade because people abuse the kindness shown. We have seen people over the years who were happy to have help but not happy to change. For example, one person who had debts and was given advice and finance to get them out of their situation and they continued to be profligate. They were happy to be dependent on others to clean up their own mess, to sponsor or subsidise their finances but not take full responsibility. Much so called "charity" goes to people delighted to be dependents. That is a recipe for compassion

fatigue. I also notice that while the father of the prodigal showed compassion on his return, he did not go out of his way to drag him back, rather he let him go to the end of himself.

Your love must never fail (that is a duty) but your compassion is more likely to drain away. Some souls are more compassionate than others but again **compassion must be tempered by love**. Compassion that is not driven by love to help a person may satisfy or fulfil a need in us but it could damage rather than help a person. Taking an extreme example, you may have compassion on a drug user but are you doing that person good if you buy him drugs or feed his addiction? Do you show love to the man who will not work by feeding him? Compassion may say yes, love says no. *2Th 3:9* We had the right not to work, but we wanted to set an example for you. *2Th 3:10* We also gave you the rule that if you don't work, you don't eat. CEV. If that rule is applied to believers why should it be a different rule for unbelievers? Should they be treated better? The world will play a tune on your compassionate heart and take you for every penny if you lose sight of Christian values.

I heard some weeks ago that a person in a local church shared a birthday party with a homosexualist from his church. What message of love does that give to that person. It does not give a message of love, rather it says I do not want to upset you on your road to hell. I do not want to see you changed for good. Despite what God says I think I can love you better by keeping company with you. Really, then read this again. 1Co 5:11 Now, what I meant was that you should not associate with people who call themselves brothers or sisters in the Christian faith but live in sexual sin, are greedy, worship false gods, use abusive language, get drunk, or are dishonest. Don't eat with such people. GW. People who tolerate sin do not love their neighbour.

How does compassion develop? I think that it is often lacking in young people because you see it in the selfish way that they live their lives, concerned for themselves, lacking spontaneity and generosity to others. Charity is something other people do and selfishness is part of their unregenerate lives. Then at some stage, something happens to them and they become empathetic, sensitive, emotional about something to the extent they want to do something. Personal experience of adverse circumstances that hits those closest to us can make us compassionate over night. That is perhaps why we vary in our level of compassion to different issues. That is part of the variety of life, the way we all engage in different things and have different sensitivities.

Just as mercy differs from compassion in that one is the act and the other is the emotion, I venture to suggest that love (agape) is more the act, which differs from the emotion of love (phileo), friendship, fondness. While you are to love everyone in the manner that we have shown, in doing your duty to them, it does not mean that you love (phileo) them as friends or that you have any fondness for them. You may love (agape) your enemies but that by no means suggests that you are bosom buddies, you are enemies. The way you love them, by doing good to them, actually brings hurt upon them in the end. Rom 12:20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Rom 12:21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

Whilst you should be more able to predict love (agape), compassion is less predictable. When we look at Jesus' ministry He loves but He also shows on occasion's great compassion. *Mat 14:14 And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick*. This is going far beyond an act of mercy or love to establish the Divine credentials. This is the revelation of the heart of someone who really cared for the human condition, for its

desperate state. Someone who takes "care" one step further. He could not pass by without going that extra mile. Yes, it really only needed one miracle to prove that He was the Messiah but the "multitude" of miracles proved that He was approachable, the God you could draw near to. Yet I suggest that in all of His works, He was subject to the will of God.

Accompanying that compassionate heart was the realisation that the whole purpose of God was to deliver men from satan. Heb 2:14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; Heb 2:15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

That path was directed by the Father. People were prepared years before to meet Jesus (that the glory of God might be manifested). Everything Jesus did had reference to the will of God, Joh 8:28 Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. Joh 8:29 And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.

There in Jesus is the example, a servant to the saints. His life is directed by the Father and I will further suggest that His feelings and emotions were also subjected to that will. Sometimes that love will bring out a sternness and resolve of character to do hard tasks. At other times it will suffer sorrow as it waits God's perfect time and it will cause tears to flow. At others it will be drawn into the love of friendship. It will bring forth mercy in its season and compassion but these, all of these, have been forged in the relationship with the Father.

The challenge to us is, could we be trusted to serve God in the use of His gifts? Could we manage them according to His word and will, especially healing or would we run off and use it to satisfy our own desires? Are our passions and desires regulated by God or by self?

10. I once was blind

One of my favourite stories in the Bible is about the healing of the man born blind. Joh 9:1 And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. Joh 9:2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Joh 9:3 Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. Joh 9:4 I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. Joh 9:5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. It starts as a casual observation by the disciples, as they pass the blind man, when they leave the Temple. There is no compassion in them for the man's predicament, just curiosity about his moral state. They speak as if the man is not present. Just like us, we cast our unfeeling and unsympathetic eyes on people and catalogue their sin, not how we can change their condition. They were thinking that either he or his parents did something really bad, for him to become blind. Blindness was considered to be an affliction that was a consequence of God's disapproval, nay a curse on the man's life.

Here we learn that not every affliction is the result of personal sin or the sins of the fathers. It is not a random effect that has left him like this. The affliction is not without its purpose. Here was a man born blind for a purpose. He was born blind to show the works of God in him. Exo 4:11 And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD? The blind man is a very special work of God, set for a very special meeting with the Son of God Himself and to set in train what follows. The blindness is a clue to the purpose.

Our Lord does a very wonderful thing in restoring his sight and to understand this I want to briefly look at what happened. We are still learning about the human eye and it is a very complex organ as Darwin acknowledged.

"To suppose that the eye with all its inimitable contrivances for adjusting the focus to different distances, for admitting different amounts of light, and for the correction of spherical and chromatic aberration, could have been formed by natural selection, seems, I freely confess, absurd in the highest sense (Darwin 1859).

But even though Darwin acknowledged that the eye could not have evolved, he went on to argue that it had, in fact, been produced by natural selection through an evolutionary process. It seems almost as though Darwin could not seem to make up his mind on the matter. But he is not the only one who has struggled to explain, from a naturalistic viewpoint, the intricacy of the eye. Evolutionist Robert Jastrow once wrote:

"The eye is a marvellous instrument, resembling a telescope of the highest quality, with a lens, an adjustable focus, a variable diaphragm for controlling the amount of light, and optical corrections for spherical and chromatic aberration. The eye appears to have been designed; no designer of telescopes could have done better. How could this marvellous instrument have evolved by chance, through a succession of random events?"

Yet these people still believed that time, chance and the unseen hands of evolution could work the miracle of creating the eye. Back in 2009, I wrote to a Professor Nilsson in Sweden, who was studying the development of the human eye. I asked him, two questions:

- 1. How is the genetic information that is associated with the structure of this "eye", transferred to the organisms' genome (written into the DNA)?
- 2. When coded, how is this genetic information (relating to this "eye") be transferred (transported?) to the reproductive system in order to be present for the next generation to evolve?

He could not say. These are important questions for evolutionists. It is about how genetic changes, information, get passed on to the next generation. His reply was, "The model of eye evolution assumes phenotypic variation, and is **not concerned with how this phenotypic variation is generated** by genetic variation". **Phenotypic variation** is observable differences between us (height, blood group, eyes colour etc). So what this professor said, was that they were not concerned with

how these variations occur or are transmitted. To me that is the most important issue, otherwise it is just hypothesising or guessing.

The fact is that if evolution were to work, it works in total darkness. It works in the mutations that occur in the dark recesses of your genitalia, your reproductive organs. The paradox would be that the eye developed in darkness. There is no known way that the proteins that we are made of, might develop by chance in our body and then write their own formula, their genetic code, into DNA. This is known as the "Central Dogma" and was proposed by one of the discoverers of DNA, Francis Crick (he refused an offer of a knighthood). It states that **information cannot be transferred back from protein to either protein or nucleic acid**. The protein, say the components of the eye, cannot write its own programme to construct and replicate itself. It is a one way process, a one way street.

But our study is not about the evolution of the human eye but the healing of the blind eye. I mention the complexity of the eye to show how miraculous and complex the healing is. The eye is part of a system and without the nerves, the retinal light converter, the central processing of the human brain, the mechanisms to repair and replenish vision and so on, an eyeball is pretty much useless. Sight is the product of a system.

There are also problems for those who were born blind, like our blind beggar, especially if they regain their sight. Many experimental studies have shown that blind persons can have superior non-visual perceptual discrimination, verbal processing and memory capacity. How does the blind brain support such superior processing? There is substantial evidence for the recruitment of the so-called "visual" cortex to support these behavioural enhancements (Pasqualotto & Proulx, 2012). A number of neuro-imaging studies discovered that the occipital lobe¹⁵ of blind individuals is active during the processing of sound, touch and smell stimuli. In other words, the part of the brain that processes sight is used to process other information. Healing requires a complete rewiring of the brain.

Exploration of our environment and the material world is critical as we develop an understanding of the world about us, therefore movement is important not only for motor development but for development of concepts. Language acquisition can also be affected by the loss of vision as active interaction with people and the environment is important in language development. Delays in the area of independence, in activities of daily living are impacted, as incidental learning through observation, sight, is not possible for those with significant visual impairments.

What happens when we first really look at the world? Generally, we don't know. We are far too young to tell what is going on in our mind. By the time children are old enough to articulate what they see, they don't remember what the world looked like in their first few weeks of life. There are special occasions, though, when full-grown adults can see for the first time. For the most part, they see a complete confusion. Often, that does a lot of emotional damage.

One of the earliest-known cases of regained sight was a man who had cataract surgery at age fifty. Soon after, he wished he had not. This is common to many blind people who regain their sight. Unlike infants, who are catered to, whose brains are primed for learning, and who have no option but to learn, blind people are asked to replace a familiar sensory system that reliably guides them

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¹⁵ The occipital lobe is at the back of the skull. If you get hit on the back of the head, you may "see" stars.

through the world, with an unfamiliar one that does nothing but confuse them. Sometimes the strain of assimilation is too much. Like many other patients, he would shut his eyes and pretend he was still blind when the situation became overwhelming. He became depressed and died of pneumonia soon after his surgery. Although he had seen the world with his eyes, he retained his "mental blindness," or what experts call "visual agnosia."

Spatial distance is often the primary problem they run into. One man saw people walking away from him as inexplicably shrinking. Another would practice spatial recognition by going out in a field and throwing his boot as far as he could. He would hold out his hand to grab it, and if it was not in reach, step forward before trying again.

Another area that many newly-sighted people find inexplicable are paintings and other visual representations. They can comprehend real objects, but not painted ones. When they do understand what the paintings are meant to represent, the shadows that are meant to define space and give shape, just look like dark marks on the painting, which, technically they are. It is only a wilful visual laziness on the part of the sighted person that lets us see these paint blotches as shadows rather than shapes and colours.

Because we develop familiarity with faces and facial expressions at specific times in our lives – those who are deprived of human contact or changing facial expressions at that age often have trouble reading expressions for their entire lives – formerly blind people are often face-blind, or unable to decipher emotion from facial expression. Some have trouble differentiating between male and female faces.

I have deliberately laboured these points, because this miracle is quite unique in the history of the world, as the man himself says, Joh 9:32 **Since the world began** was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. Joh 9:33 If this man were not of God, he could do nothing. Some versions translate the passage as "the first time in history anyone has given sight to the blind". We are taken back by this to the beginning, to the start of history, to the creation, because this is a creation miracle and it is done by the Light of the World, Joh 9:5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. Joh 9:6 When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay.

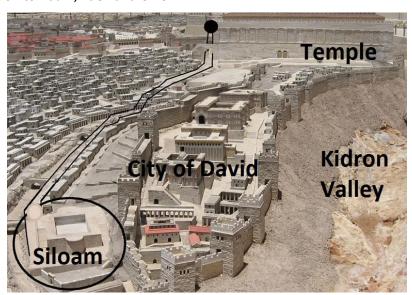
He who is the restorer of sight is He who gave sight in the beginning. As Jesus forms eyes of clay, so He formed Adam in the beginning. Gen 2:7 And the LORD God formed (יצר) = yâtsar) man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. The Hebrew suggests that Adam was "squeezed into shape" as a potter forms and fashions a pot (an analogy Paul uses in Romans chapter 9). Job notes this same thing, Job 33:6 I also am formed out of the clay. The Creator moulds new eyes for the blind man but still he does not see. He must wash in the pool of Siloam or Shiloah. Did Adam wash off the residual clay in the day of his creation?

The blind man appears to have been approached as Jesus left the Temple. He has to walk a reasonable distance from the Temple down to the pool of Siloam and it does not appear that anyone accompanied him as he stumbles towards the water.

What is the significance of the pool of Siloam¹⁶? Isa 8:5 The LORD spake also unto me again, saying, Isa 8:6 Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah that go softly, and rejoice in Rezin and **Remaliah's son; Isa 8:7 Now therefore,** behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks:

In Isaiah's prophecy, (Chapters 7 and 8, please read) the nation is warned of the judgement coming in the form of Assyria. This judgement is set in antithesis against the gentle rule of King David. The waters of Shiloah, the waters of the benign King David are set against the torrents of Assyria, which as we know from our last series on prophecy, washed Israel, the northern Kingdom, away into oblivion. The blind man is sent to the gentle waters of David, by the son of David and we should not rule out the possibility of the connection to Adam, Eden and Gihon.

The healing of the blind man draws the attention of the Pharisees. Joh 9:13 They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. Joh 9:14 And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. Joh 9:15 Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see. Joh 9:16 Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of



God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.

The Pharisaic blindness is frightening. The people that had supposedly lived by the law had no clue about it whatsoever. On another Sabbath day, Jesus had questioned, Mar 3:4 And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace. Mar 3:5 And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other.

But Jesus is not here and the Pharisees must be content to interrogate the man healed. Joh 9:26 Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes? Joh 9:27 He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples? Joh 9:28 Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses'

¹⁶ See p 92 **Jesus and Prophecy**, "Interestingly, there were four rivers that watered Eden. Two survived the Great Flood, Euphrates and Gihon. *Gen 2:13 And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia*. Is this the Gihon that provided water for Jerusalem? *2Ch 32:30 This same Hezekiah also stopped the upper watercourse of Gihon, and brought it straight down to the west side of the city of David. And Hezekiah prospered in all his works."*

disciples. Joh 9:29 We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is. Joh 9:30 The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. Joh 9:31 Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. Joh 9:32 Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. Joh 9:33 If this man were not of God, he could do nothing. The feisty former blind beggar gives as good as he gets.

Now we see the meaning and purpose of this miracle after Jesus meets up with the man again. Joh 9:39 And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that **they which see not might see**; and that **they which see might be made blind.** Joh 9:40 And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? Joh 9:41 Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.

Jesus is both the light of the world but He is also the one who blinds the world, "I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind". Those people who claim to be enlightened will be blinded because they have a false illumination. They are their own lights and will not come to the true light that enlightens every man that comes into the world. Therefore they, being blind to Christ retain their sin. They will never cry out Rom 7:24 O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? They will never see the depths of sin in their own lives but will never stop seeing the sin in the lives of others.

Nearly one-fifth of the Gospel accounts are devoted to Jesus' healing ministry, including the circumstances, the methods used and the effects on the patients and those who were onlookers. Out of 3,779 verses in the four Gospels, 727 relate specifically to the healing of physical and mental illness and the resurrection of the dead. There are by my reckoning 7 instances where blind people were healed by Jesus. This is not something that the apostles and disciples do, with two exceptions.

- 1. Saul. Act 9:8 And Saul was lifted up from the earth, but his eyes being opened he saw no one. And leading him by the hand they brought him to Damascus.
- 2. Elymas. Act 13:11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is on you, and you will be blind, not seeing the sun until a time. And instantly a mist and darkness fell on him, and going about he sought some to lead him by the hand. Act 13:12 Then seeing the thing happening, the proconsul believed, being astounded at the doctrine of the Lord.

The miraculous healing of the blind was principally the domain of Jesus and is strongly associated with His work as the Light of the World and the forgiver of sin in a world of darkness. It is healing with a deep spiritual meaning. The two blindings and healings in the Acts of Apostles are judgements upon individuals.

The question remains as to whether this type of miraculous healing has been passed on to the church or whether it was unique to the time of Christ? The fact is that it happened historically, the question remains will it do so again? Why not? Yet it was very rare?

Looking beyond this miracle, there is perhaps another thought that we may close with. In many respects, we are like that blind man. We are in heaven with Jesus and we hear the sounds of heaven,

the words of heaven around us. We feel the presence of Christ but we do not see Him as clearly and openly as we would like. There is still a certain darkness that surrounds us. 1Co 13:12 Now all we can see of God is like a cloudy picture in a mirror. Later we will see him face to face. We don't know everything, but then we will, just as God completely understands us. CEV.

If we wonder why we cannot see Him as He is in all His glory, it is because we are not yet ready for it. We are still developing. 1Co 13:9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; 1Co 13:10 but when the perfect thing comes, then that which is in part will be caused to cease. 1Co 13:11 When I was an infant, I spoke as an infant, I thought as an infant, I reasoned as an infant. But when I became a man, I caused to cease the things of the infant. 1Co 13:12 For now we see through a mirror in dimness, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I will fully know even as I also was fully known.

For now we have the dim light of prophecy, the word to guide us in this dark place but it will be replaced by the day star. 2Pe 1:19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; to which ye do well that ye take heed, as to a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts: Webster. Like the blind man who washed at the gentle waters of Siloam, we shall open our eyes and see the glory of God in all its fullness.

Perhaps this is what happens in death. It is a change such that we enter a new world of light, painlessly transitioning, without any joins or gaps, seamlessly. Like that blind man, we emerge from this present darkness into eternal light. In the blink of an eye!

11. From death to life

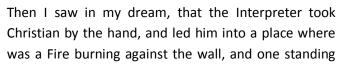
I will not go through all of the seven signs with you and I leave that for your own devotions. I will however deal with one more that involves a very unusual healing. It is a healing from death itself, the raising of Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary. Our Lord has much to do with this little family, who at times seem closer than His own. Their lives provide many occasions for illustrating the Lord's works and teachings. Joh 11:1 Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. Joh 11:2 (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.) Joh 11:3 Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. Joh 11:4 When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. Joh 11:5 Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

Whatever happens in Bethany, happens out of love for all three of these persons. I say this because it casts a light upon how the Lord works and brings about those events into our lives, which cause great despair and trials of faith. We question "why does God put us through all of this anguish" and suddenly we are brought to a realisation of its purpose. We stand at a tomb in tears and from that darkness, we do not only see Lazarus restored, but our Lord in a new and brighter light. It is the strength given through the revelation of who Christ really is, that is our strength. It is the revelation of His power that infuses our lives with Divine optimism that indeed "all things do work together for good" and some might add, eventually. Whereas all we saw was death and corruption, now we can only see life and the "Resurrection and the Life".

In the place of sadness and despair, Mary and Martha were not alone but neither could they see that great truth, which Paul would later reveal to us, Rom 8:28 Also we knowe that all thinges worke together for the best vnto them that love God, even to them that are called of his purpose. Geneva. Just as the blind man was made blind for the glory of God, so Lazarus will die for the glory of God and may we pray too that our lives may be spent well in the same great cause.

Jesus deliberately lets Lazarus die. Joh 11:6 When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was. He could have saved him this experience and saved

the family their grief but He lets the event run its course to the graveyard. He lets Lazarus die, He lets them grieve but none the less, He loved them. Sometimes we fail to see the purpose of trials and tribulations. Bunyan describes how they can work grace in us.





by it, always casting much water upon it, to quench it; yet did the Fire burn higher and hotter.

Then said Christian, What means this?

The Interpreter answered, This Fire is the Work of Grace that is wrought in the heart; he that casts water upon it, to extinguish and put it out, is the Devil: But in that you see the Fire notwithstanding burn higher and hotter, you will also see the reason of that. So he had him about to the backside of the wall, where he saw a Man with a Vessel of Oil in his hand, of which, he did also continually cast (but secretly) into the Fire.

Then said Christian, What means this?

The Interpreter answered, This is Christ, who continually with the Oil of His Grace maintains the work already begun in the heart: By the means of which, notwithstanding what the Devil can do, the souls of His people prove gracious still. And in that you saw, that the Man stood behind the wall to maintain the Fire; this is to teach you, **That it is hard for the Tempted to see how this Work of Grace is maintained in the soul**.

Jesus disciples as yet have no idea of what is about to happen, they are more concerned about the dangers of going back into harms way because the Jews sought to stone Jesus. Joh 11:7 Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judaea again. Joh 11:8 His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again? Joh 11:9 Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. Joh 11:10 But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him. Jesus was not walking in darkness because He saw His way clearly before Him. His hour had not yet come and this visit to Lazarus would not be an occasion of stumbling.

Jesus teaches us a new term for death. He says of Lazarus that he **sleeps**. To the disciples this is good news because then as now rest is quite curative. .Joh 11:11 These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Joh 11:12

Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Joh 11:13 Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Joh 11:14 Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. When Jesus said "sleep" he meant in our language, dead.

We are touching here on something called "the intermediate state". The intermediate state or interim state refers to a person's "intermediate" existence between one's physical death and the universal resurrection. Are we unconscious or conscious in that period? The use of the term sleep has led to some false concepts like "soul sleep". Soul sleep is the teaching that when a person dies that his soul "sleeps" until the time of the future resurrection. In this condition, the person is not aware or conscious. The Jehovah's Witnesses and the Seventh-day Adventists hold to this doctrine but the Jehovah's Witnesses also teach annihilation. This means that after death, a person ceases to exist. At the future resurrection they maintain that the soul is made again. Basically, it is a recreation of the individual. The Seventh-day Adventists teach that the soul is simply inert and resides in the memory of God.

If we read the story of Lazarus and the rich man, not the same Lazarus from Bethany, *Luk 16:22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; Luk 16:23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments.* The rich man was certainly far from unconscious sleep. Likewise on the mount of Transfiguration, Moses and Elijah are far from asleep, *Mar 9:4 And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus.* You will find other like proofs in Scripture.

So why use the term sleep? I believe that it is more than an excellent euphemism to describe the continuity of life while at the same time showing the conscious disconnection from the living. From **our** perspective they are alive but asleep, from theirs they are conscious in the presence of God. 1Th 4:14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 1Th 4:15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. He is not the God of the dead but the God of the living.

Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, has passed into the intermediate state and he has a story that he will never disclose. The first thing that I would ask him is "what was it like?" "How did death feel when it came, what did you see, who did you see, what did it look like in heaven?" If anyone asked him, they never recorded it.

Jesus could of course have saved him from death on his sickbed or raised him before he was buried. No, Lazarus must lie in the grave and he must see corruption. Events must turn to the worst case scenario. Possibly our Lord would have been tested by the sorrowing family to have intervened sooner, had He been there. Joh 11:15 And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him. Jesus awaits His time.

The disciples had still not understood that Jesus was not in harms way, so they saw the journey as life threatening. *Joh 11:16 Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellowdisciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.* Whatever we may say about the post resurrection doubt of Thomas, we cannot doubt his loyalty or bravery to go to die with his master but on this occasion it is another's grave.

When Jesus arrives, the internment is over and the family are gathered to mourn their loss. *Joh* 11:17 Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already. Joh 11:18 Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off: Joh 11:19 And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.

The family of Lazarus did not doubt the resurrection, what they did doubt was that it would take place there and then. They were expecting it on the last day of Earth, the end of the World. Joh 11:20 Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house. Joh 11:21 Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. Joh 11:22 But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. Joh 11:23 Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Joh 11:24 Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

Where did Martha get her views of the resurrection? Job makes one of the earliest statements. *Job* 19:25 I know that there is someone to defend me and that he lives! And in the end, he will stand here on earth and defend me. Job 19:26 After I leave my body and my skin has been destroyed, I know I will still see God. Job 19:27 I will see him with my own eyes. I myself, not someone else, will see God. And I cannot tell you how excited that makes me feel! ERV. Daniel also prophecies about the resurrection, Dan 12:1 And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. Dan 12:2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. Isaiah too speaks of resurrection, Isa 26:19 Your people will rise to life! Tell them to leave their graves and celebrate with shouts. You refresh the earth like morning dew; you give life to the dead. CEV.

Martha's theology is spot on. Yet it is also incomplete. She is about to learn something profound about life and death. Joh 11:25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: Joh 11:26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? Joh 11:27 She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world. What Martha is learning is that the resurrection and life itself, exist only in **ONE** person. All else is death. Life only exists in Jesus, in the Christ. This is a profound statement.

Jesus is showing that He is both the creator and sustainer of life. The creation of the first man Adam was in a manner of speaking a resurrection. Adam is moulded and raised by God out of the dust of the earth, just as Daniel pictures the resurrection, Dan 12:2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. Whatever man is, he is nothing apart from his Creator. He was just mud, dirt, dust on the wind. He became alive only when God imparted His breath into him. We might say that Adam was a corpse on the ground before God gave him life and when that life ends we return to the ground.

Somewhere between that commencement of life and departure, our existence in this world is totally dependent upon the Creator. Job 33:4 The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life. Ecc 12:7 Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it. The spirit of life is on loan as it were. Every heartbeat, every pulse

of blood, every breath is a gift of life, new every morning, but it is owned by Jesus. Few see this great truth.

This is not a mechanistic Universe in the sense that when God created it, it was like a clock that was wound up and left to run by itself until it ran out of energy and with its last "tick" died. This is not a Universe in which we are somehow responsible for our own well being and life support, such that life and death are in our power, such that we are responsible for our last breath. No, no. He upholds all things by the word of His power, Heb 1:2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Heb 1:3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, and in Him all things hold together Col 1:17 He existed before everything and holds everything together. GW.

John Gill puts it sweetly when he comments on Paul's remark at Mars Hill, Act 17:28 For in him we have life and motion and existence; as certain of your verse writers have said, For we are his offspring. BBE.

For in him we live, and move, and have our being,.... The natural life which men live is from God; and they are supported in it by him; and from him they have all the comforts and blessings of life; and all motions, whether external or internal, of body or of mind, are of God, and none of them are without the concourse of his providence, and strength assistance from him; though the disorder and irregularity of these motions, whereby they become sinful, are of themselves, or of the devil; and their being, and the maintenance of it, and continuance in it, are all owing to the power and providence of God.

This leads us further to the thought that we were never designed to have life without God in our lives. Our very existence now and in eternity can only be a reality, due to the fact that God will sustain us. We have no life in ourselves whatsoever. Joh 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. Joh 1:4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men. As Asaph observed, Psa 73:23 Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand. Psa 73:24 Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Psa 73:25 Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. Psa 73:26 My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. We live only because He lives.

Without our Creator, we are a heap of atoms, ordered into chemicals, linked into proteins but altogether lifeless. We are totally incomplete without the Creator in our life. We are as Adam, alone and that is not good. The woman was not given to replace God but to help man, to be a counterpart until the Saviour arises, then marriage no longer exists because we shall all be complete in Jesus. Jesus is not just our Saviour, He is our very life. *Joh 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and THE LIFE: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me*. How could Jesus demonstrate that truth that He is that life? By putting that life back into a man.

Jesus is about to give the greatest demonstration of His power as the sole life giver and sustainer of life. Joh 11:28 And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee. Joh 11:29 As soon as she heard that, she arose

quickly, and came unto him. Joh 11:30 Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him. Joh 11:31 The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there. Joh 11:32 Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. Joh 11:33 When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, Joh 11:34 And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see.

What happens next reveals the humanity of our Saviour. "He weeps". Joh 11:35 Jesus wept.. The fact that He was one of us with all of our emotions and feelings. That in Him we see God's genuine love and concern for His elect. Heb 4:15 For we do not have a high priest not being **able to sympathize** with our weaknesses but One having been tried in all respects according to our likeness, apart from sin. LITV.

Jesus' obedience to the Father carries with it that frailty of our nature, whereby we suffer the sadness and grief of loss, in that place where we feel most deeply our mortality He is there with us. Here is revealed to us another glimpse of the incarnate deity for within the space of minutes, He will rise from His weeping humanity and tower over death in His Divinity. He will look up through His tears to heaven and for the sake of the onlookers declare *Joh 11:41 Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me*, and says it so that they would be encouraged in their faith.

The delay in responding to His friends death confuses the people. Joh 11:36 Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him! Joh 11:37 And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? Joh 11:38 Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Joh 11:39 Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days. Joh 11:40 Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?

The stage is set. Joh 11:41 Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. Joh 11:42 And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, **that they may believe that thou hast sent me**. Joh 11:43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. Joh 11:44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

I like this translation, Joh 11:43 And saying these things, He cried out with a loud voice, Lazarus! Here! Outside! LITV. These words do not bring Lazarus from the dead because Lazarus has to be alive to hear them. Lazarus is alive and bound in the darkness of the tomb but the voice calls him to the light of the world.

How would you have reacted to such a scene as this? This is no show for those at Bethany. This is no play or drama by actors. It is reality. The shock and sorrow of death were replaced by another shock. Perhaps a shiver ran up their spines as the words of Jesus echoed away among the tombs. "Lazarus come forth" and their ears strained for a sound. Then they hear the padding of feet and the feint

rustling of the grave clothes as the shadowy figure emerges into the daylight. What emotions surged through their hearts in that moment?

Joh 11:45 Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him. Joh 11:46 But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done. Joh 11:47 Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. Joh 11:48 If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. Joh 11:49 And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, Joh 11:50 Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. Joh 11:51 And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; Joh 11:52 And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. Joh 11:53 **Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death**.

Was it really a happy ending? The day Lazarus arose was the day they began plotting to kill Jesus. From that day also Lazarus was also a target for the evil of the priests, *Joh 12:10 But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death*; Religious people do not like miracles and they will do all that they can to destroy those who do.

Lazarus would die again, because he was raised for a short season and I wonder whether he went back to that same grave again to await the voice of Jesus on the Last day? Just as healing was temporary, so was the resurrection of Lazarus temporary. If there is any joy here, it is that we have life only in Jesus¹⁷.

12. A sick world

When Jesus healed the blind man (John 9), it was not just an act of mercy, it was more importantly to show that He was the one who would lead men from darkness to light. When Paul recounts his meeting with Jesus, as he speaks to King Agrippa, he emphasises this spiritual point. Act 26:15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. Act 26:16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Act 26:17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, Act 26:18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

The healing of the blind man was a miracle to show the redemptive power of Christ. Jesus' miracles had purpose and were unique in that respect. The prophet of Islam by his own admission did no miracles. There is no incontrovertible evidence that any other religious leaders did miracles. Miracles with spiritual purpose, the Divine healings of Jesus, like His resurrection are unique to Jesus. It will remain for us to explore whether all miraculous healings that occur within the church have similar

¹⁷ Watch https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T6TrnPzYMps

spiritual meaning or fall into a different category. By that I mean, do miracles have to illustrate the redemptive power of the person of Jesus or are they also acts of Divine kindness to us?

Looking at health in general, was Jesus day any different to ours in terms of the level of sickness in the community? I would have thought that it would have been worse in Jesus day but is that correct? It is estimated that In Palestine at the time of Jesus the average lifespan was 40 to 45 years. Life in medieval Europe was little different, although if you remove the high infant mortality statistics, the average life expectancy is higher. If you lived to twenty years, you might have another 30 or so years left. Living a long life though, does not mean living a healthy life. How sick are we today in the UK, for example? We may live longer but are we healthier or are we just sustained by artificial medicines, chemical crutches? Here are some numbers to help you make up your mind:

- 1. There are 9.4 million physically disabled people in England, accounting for 18 per cent of the population.
- 2. 50% of women and 43% of men in England are now regularly taking prescription drugs.
- 3. 10% of mothers and 6% of fathers in the UK have mental health problems at any given time.
- 4. 31million days were lost to sickness in 2013, down from 178million in 1993 but 'People are turning up to work sick and the driver is job insecurity. Are they too scared to take a sick day? Absolutely,' says an expert.
- 5. Two million of us are addicted to tranquillisers, while countless thousands abuse over-the-counter painkillers.
- 6. 2013: NHS hospitals dealt with 15.1 million admissions in 2012-13, that is about 41,500 admissions per day on average across England.

I could go on but you get the point. A Mayo Clinic study found that nearly 70 percent of Americans are prescribed at least one medication, with antibiotics, antidepressants, and opioids topping the list. Nearly seven out of 10 Americans were prescribed at least one drug in 2009, and half were given two or more. In the 21st century, despite great leaps in medical science and treatment we are a sick population. Sickness is very close to all of us. If you are in a state of good health, if you are not on some form of medication, you are fortunate and you are in all probability, a minority group. We might say quite accurately that in this so called developed country (UK), there are multitudes of sick people. It is far worse in the developing world and most certainly there were no shortage of patients in Jesus' day.

As Christians we also observe that sickness is not merely caused by physical deterioration or chemical imbalances. There is another factor at work and that is sickness influenced and controlled by demonic forces. It was a reality in Jesus day and I see nothing to tell me that things have changed since then. The healings of Jesus covered a broad spectrum of sickness, including what we would call today "mental health" problems. Here are some examples of Jesus' healing:

Mat 4:23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and **healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease** among the people. Mat 4:24 And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and **torments** (β άσανος = basanos = tortured), and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed

them. Mat 4:25 **And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee**, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judaea, and from beyond Jordan. There were souls in torment in this life not just in the next. Luk 16:23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

The harvest of Israel was ripe but it was also rotten and needed healing. Mat 9:35 And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. Mat 9:36 But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Mat 9:37 Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Mat 9:38 Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

How far does this compassion extend? *Mat 10:5 These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: Mat 10:6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Mat 10:7 And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.* It is quite exclusive. It is to the people of God, the people of Israel, the Jews not the gentiles at this time. Perhaps the lesson here is that God's own people have need of healing and in showing the physical, visible, outward healing it confirms that the deeper healing of the soul will also be accomplished. This is not healing just for its own sake.

The nation of Israel was sick, not just physically but spiritually, as Isaiah warned, *Isa* 1:3 The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Isa 1:4 Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Isa 1:5 Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. Isa 1:6 From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment. Isa 1:7 Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers. Isa 1:8 And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.

We can see the biblical association between physical sickness and spiritual sickness. The natural sickness mirrors the spiritual sickness, sin. Included among these sicknesses is demon possession. One extreme case involves blindness and dumbness, *Mat 12:22 Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb*: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. Mat 12:23 And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David?...... Luk 11:14 And he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered. Luk 11:15 But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils.

Assuming that possibly these are one and the same miracle, we learn that some ailments with physical symptoms, such as blindness and dumbness are attributable to demons or evil spirits. What are we to make of the man who was in this state? Was he an unbelieving Israelite, an Israelite but

not born again, an unregenerate man? If he was a believing Israelite, how could he be possessed of a devil? This is a much asked question, "Can believers, can Christians, be demon possessed?" To answer that we need to understand the term "demon possessed". The words "possessed with devils" or "demon possessed" is only one word in the original Greek, $\delta\alpha\mu\nu$ ($\zeta\mu\alpha$) = daimonizomai. It is not made up of a word for "demon" combined with another word for "possession". It is one word and it means to be exercised by a demon, transliterated, we would say "**to be demonized**". This raises a further question, "to what extent can we be demonised?"

The idea of "possession" would suggest that an individual is totally under the control of satan, in every aspect of their life. The word "demonised" however does not necessarily imply total control and as we see, can be restricted to specific bodily functions. For example a person "demonised" could be "blind and dumb". Then there is the phenomenon of supernatural strength, and vocalisation of other personalities, as with the man at Gadara. The demon can control motor functions, speech function, visual functions and much more but not necessarily all at once. If that is correct, can a believer be demonised?

To what extent would you and I recognise demonization? Is it that obvious? Would we mistake it for a physical disease and treat it as such? Take this account of physical infirmity. Would it have been obvious that it was at root cause, demonic. Luk 13:11 And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. Luk 13:12 And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. Here is a woman in a similar condition to Emma Smith who we spoke of in the first chapter, a poor woman bent double like a letter 'C'. Did that woman in the Bible understand the nature of her illness or just suffer the physical consequences in ignorance?

Jesus understood the nature of her symptoms. Luk 13:16 And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day? This woman was "bound by satan", in other words, an evil spirit had caused her weakness. Yet we are told that this woman was a daughter of Abraham, she was a believer, just as Zaccheus was a believer, Luk 19:9 And Jesus said to him, Today salvation has come to this house, for he also is a son of Abraham. Would you have recognised that the woman's infirmity was demon induced and would you tell me Christians could not have their health affected by satan? I will return to this subject later in order to show that demonization among Christians is far more common than we might think.

The powers of evil against which we battle are subtly demonic. Who would have thought a nice person could be a devil? 2Co 11:14 And did not satan marvelously transform himself into an angel of light? 2Co 11:15 It is not a great thing, then, if also his ministers transform themselves as ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works. Have you always thought that men would not go into the ministry if they were evil because it is contrary to the evil that they pledge to fight. You are mistaken, churches are full of them. Antichrists arise in the churches, 1Jn 2:18 Little children, it is a last hour, and as you heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have risen up, from which you know that it is a last hour. 1Jn 2:19 They went out from us, but they were not of us. For if they were of us, they would have remained with us; but they left so that it might be revealed that they all are not of us.

What about someone who inflicted self-harm? Self-harm is when somebody intentionally damages or injures their body. It is said that it is usually a way of coping with or expressing overwhelming emotional distress. Sometimes when people self-harm, they feel that on some level that they intend to die. Over half of people who die by suicide have a history of self-harm. However, the intention is more often to punish themselves, express their distress or relieve unbearable tension. Sometimes the reason is a mixture of both. One of the so called psychological causes for self-harm is having repeated thoughts or voices telling them to self-harm. They apparently lose touch with who they are and with their surroundings and it is sometimes referred to as a borderline personality disorder.

What about this man in the Bible? *Mar 5:5* And continually night and day in the hills, and in the tombs, he was crying and cutting himself with stones. Was it a borderline personality disorder? He was so hard to deal with, Mar 5:4 Because he had often been bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been torn by him, and the fetters had been shattered. And no one was able to subdue him. I suppose that the modern equivalent would be a "chemical cosh", something to render him docile but at the same time without cure. I wonder how many times these so called therapists are talking to the demon and not the actual patient.

The difference between what we might call normal and abnormal may be hard to discern. King Saul's fears were not irrational, they were demon induced. 1Sa 16:14 And the Spirit of Jehovah departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from Jehovah terrified him. The fears were removed by the therapy of David's harp, music therapy. 1 Sa 16:23 And it happened, when the evil spirit from God was on Saul, then David would take the harp and play with his hand. And there was relief for Saul, and it was well with him. And the evil spirit would depart from him. I have no idea how this worked or why it worked, but clearly it worked. Perhaps it was the soothing rhythm that relieved Saul's torment? 1Sa 16:23 Whenever the evil spirit from God bothered Saul, David would play his harp. Saul would relax and feel better, and the evil spirit would go away. CEV. Does this also suggest that if we have tensions in our lives, we become more prone to demonization, more open to attack? Whatever the reason, here is a biblical justification for the use of music to calm the soul.

Researchers in Sweden (2013) monitored the heart rates of singers as they performed a variety of choral works. They found that as the members sang in unison, their pulses began to speed up and slow down at the same rate. Writing in the journal Frontiers in Psychology, the scientists believe the synchrony occurs because the singers coordinate their breathing. Dr Bjorn Vickhoff, from the Sahlgrenska Academy at Gothenburg University in Sweden, said: "The pulse goes down when you exhale and when you inhale it goes up. "So when you are singing, you are singing on the air when you are exhaling so the heart rate would go down. And between the phrases you have to inhale and the pulse will go up.

"If this is so then heart rate would follow the structure of the song or the phrases, and this is what we measured and this is what we confirmed." The scientists studied 15 choir members as they performed different types of songs. When you exhale you activate the vagus nerve... that goes form the brain stem to the heart Dr Bjorn Vickhoff, Gothenburg University They found that the more structured the work, the more the singers' heart

rates increased or decreased together. Slow chants, for example, produced the most synchrony.

If our hearts can be calmed by the right sort of music, then there are grounds for using it to relieve stress. It does not though suggest that music could convert the individual or that King Saul was permanently cured of this messenger of satan.

Can we as Christians be afflicted with fears that terrify us? I say yes, because if it were not so, why would we be exhorted otherwise? Jas 4:7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Why would we have to resist something if it were not a reality in our lives. We are under continuous attack and that is why we need to be armour plated. Eph 6:11 Put on all the armour that God gives, so you can defend yourself against the devil's tricks. CEV.

Is humanity more in the grip of demonic activity than we think? Is satan so good at his disguises that we are convinced that he does not exist. I think so and that he is hiding in plain sight. For example, there is a popular myth that serial killers are dysfunctional loners but listen to this:

The majority of serial killers are not reclusive social misfits who live alone, despite pervasive depictions of them as such in the news and entertainment media, including the socially challenged "Tooth Fairy" serial killer in the film Red Dragon. Real-life serial killers are not the isolated monsters of fiction and, frequently, they do not appear to be strange or stand out from the public in any meaningful way.

Many serial killers are able to successfully hide out in plain sight for extended periods of time. Those who successfully blend in are typically also employed, have families and homes and outwardly appear to be non-threatening, normal members of society. Because serial killers can appear to be so innocuous, they are often overlooked by law enforcement officials, as well as their own families and peers.

In some rare cases, an unidentified serial killer will even socialize and become friendly with the unsuspecting police detectives who are tracking him. The incredible tale of Ed Kemper (the "Co-ed Killer") provides an example of this phenomenon.

Serial killers who hide out in plain sight are able to do so precisely because they look just like everyone else. It is their ability to blend in that makes them very dangerous, frightening and yet very compelling to the general public.

Have you ever felt, if only for an instant, so angry you could hit someone, maybe even murder them? No, but maybe you lose your temper in traffic, ranting about "the other idiot drivers" and if you could you would push them off the road? Or you get cross with the service you get and the people who serve you in shops and restaurants because people are idiots? Then in a moment you are back to your "normal" self. Have you ever wondered who put those thoughts in your head?

Let me list some of the phenomenon associated with demonic activity.

- **Psychic ability** Act 16:16 And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying:
- **Seizures** Mat 17:15 and said, "Sir, have mercy on my son. He suffers from seizures. Often he falls into fire or water. GW.
- Inability to speak Mat 9:32 As they were leaving, some people brought a man to Jesus. The man was unable to talk because he was possessed by a demon. GW.
- **Deafness** Mar 9:25 When Jesus saw that a crowd was gathering fast, he spoke sternly to the evil spirit that had kept the boy from speaking or hearing. He said, "I order you to come out of the boy! Don't ever bother him again." CEV.
- **Blindness** Mat 12:22 Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw
- **Screaming and self-harm** *Mar 5:5 Night and day he was among the tombs and on the mountainsides screaming and cutting himself with stones.*
- **Demonically driven to homelessness** Luk 8:27 And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs.

It seems that there are quite a number of our functions that can be controlled by demons. Our general health, our sight, our hearing, our ability to speak, our emotions, our motor functions, our voices, our posture can all be influenced by satan. I will leave you to think further about this and DV we shall look further into the question, "Can these things happen to a Christian?"

13. Demonization and the Christian

We have replaced the term "demon possession" in favour of the biblical transliteration "demonization". It is used to explain the effect of demons as they influence our health and our lives. We have asked the question with respect to demonization and associated illnesses, "Can these things happen to a Christian?" Could we, for example, suffer deafness, or seizures as a result of demon activity? We have suggested that it is possible, without violating the new nature in the child of God, as I hope to demonstrate further.

I think that Christians make a mental disconnect between what happens today and what happened in the days of Jesus. We may read those old stories, the stories of Jesus, as something in an age which no longer exists, an age in which miracles and demons were a reality but are no longer so. They are put in a mystical past, like in the days of King Arthur, like the days of the Greek heroes. Nice interesting stories, giant characters and moral examples of people long gone. We live in a New Age and we have to make religion relevant to today. The efforts to which some so called Christians go to deny the existence of spiritual gifts in our day, serves to further widen the divide between our day and Jesus' day. My personal position is that **nothing has changed**. We have the same Jesus, the same salvation, same terms and conditions and the same satanic enemies working in the same way as ever.

Let us consider the way we perceive this world from a biblical perspective and as we do so, I want to suggest that, what people perceive and understand about the world around us, is what God wants

us to see about it. I am not suggesting some mystical approach to reality but I am suggesting that the control by the Creator is far greater than we give Him credit for. This also extends to what we call the powers of darkness. Right at the beginning, after the creation, we have a talking serpent, showing that creation can be controlled by demons. We may think that we are too sophisticated for this idea in our day and age but most people will hear that same evil voice in their minds at least once a day. A whole legion of demons entered the pigs at Gadara and swept the herd to its death.

There are many unusual stories in the Scriptures which many people today will laugh at as old fables but they will happily watch a cartoon of a green monster (Shrek) whose friends are a talking cat and a talking donkey. They will suspend belief to fill their minds with this, so why should they have problems with a Bible story that has a talking donkey and an angel in it? Num 22:30 And the ass said unto Balaam, Am not I thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine unto this day? was I ever wont to do so unto thee? And he said, Nay. Num 22:31 Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face.

The Christian faith holds a cosmic view that embraces a supranatural realm where "principalities and powers", both good and bad, interact with this natural world. In this cosmos, the natural world can be controlled by unseen forces. These powers for good and evil can very easily control our health and other physical abilities. In Sodom we read that Lot was saved by the intervention of Angels when the wicked men surrounded his home. Gen 19:4 But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter: Gen 19:5 And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them. The intervention causes mass blindness. Gen 19:11 And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to find the door.

There is an example in the NT where both blindness and the inability to speak are caused by demons. *Mat 12:22 Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw.* This and the example of Sodom would suggest that the organs of sight and speech were controlled in such a way as to render them inoperable. There is nothing physiologically wrong with the body, it is that some functions are inhibited from functioning normally. Just what is affected, we cannot say but the cure is not to recreate the organs of sight or speech, it is to remove the devil causing it.

If the demonic powers can create the symptoms of blindness, speechlessness and deafness, what other diseases that we attribute to "natural" causes, may be caused by demons? I suggest that the phenomenon is far more widely spread than we give it credit. In a society which is highly superstitious it may be far closer to the surface than in a secular unbelieving society. Either way the devil has his believers.

Dr John Livingston Nevius (4^{th} March 1829 – 19^{th} October 1893) was, for forty years, a pioneering American Protestant missionary in China, appointed by the American Presbyterian Mission; his

missionary ideas were also very important in the spread of the church in Korea¹⁸. He wrote several books on the themes of Chinese religions, customs and social life, and missionary work. His subsequent interest in the phenomenon of spirit possession was sparked off by conversations about the supernatural with his language tutor, Mr. Tu; the Chinese had a strong belief in the reality and power of the spirit world that was part of an animistic tradition going back thousands of years. This is how Dr J Nevius came to change his mind on modern day demonization¹⁹:

My first home in China was in the city of Ningpo, in the province of Che-kiang, which place we reached in the spring of 1854. My first work was of course that of acquiring the language. A native scholar, Mr. Tu, was engaged to serve me as a teacher. He was a strong believer in the "supernatural," and when we could understand each other through the medium of his vernacular, spiritual manifestations and possessions formed a frequent subject of conversation. I brought with me to China a strong conviction that a belief in demons, and communications with spiritual beings, belongs exclusively to a barbarous and superstitious age, and at present can consist only with mental weakness and want of culture. I indulged Mr. Tu, however, in talking on his favourite topics, because he did so with peculiar fluency and zest, and thus elements of variety and novelty were utilized in our severe and otherwise monotonous studies. But Mr. Tu's marvellous stories soon lost the charm of novelty. I used my best endeavours, though with little success, to convince him that his views were the combined result of ignorance and imagination. I could not but notice, however, the striking resemblance between some of his statements of alleged facts and the demonology of Scripture. This resemblance I accounted for as only apparent or accidental, though it still left in my mind an unpleasant regret that it was so strong and I should also add a feeling amounting almost to regret that such detailed statements should have been recorded in the Bible.

In the summer of 1861, we removed from Ningpo to the province of Shantung in northern China. There again I met with many evidences of this same popular belief, which constantly confronted us in the prosecution of our missionary work.

Dr Nevius began to collect stories of demonization from other missionaries. Letters like this one from Mr. W. D. Rudland of the China Inland Mission, dated Tai-Chow, July 8th, 1881.

"My dear Dr. Nevius:

You may think it strange that I have not before answered your note asking for information respecting demoniacal possessions in this part of China. The main reason for my delay is that I wished to investigate on the spot a case which the enclosed letter

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¹⁸ The Yoido Full Gospel Church in Seoul, South Korea is a megachurch, with the largest congregation in the world. On a typical day 200,000 will attend one of seven services along with another two or three hundred thousand watching them on TV in adjoining buildings or satellite branches. While some other churches may be losing members, this one just keeps growing. The main sanctuary holds 21,000 worshipers packed to the rafters seven times every Sunday.

¹⁹ Demon Possession and Allied Themes Being an Inductive Study of Phenomena of Our Own Times By Rev. John L. Nevius, D.D. For Forty Years a Missionary to the Chinese. https://archive.org/details/demonpossessiona00nevi 0

refers to. The letter I think speaks for itself; and needs no further explanation. It was written by a very reliable native helper, in whom I had good reason to confide, and was sent to Mr. Williamson, who was superintending the work here during my absence in England. A copy of the letter was sent to the editor of 'China's Millions,' but was not thought fit for publication.

On my return to China in the autumn of 1876 Mr. Williamson kindly gave me a copy of the letter, and we visited the place together, making what enquiries we could about the matter. Since then, having a station there, I have frequently visited the place, and become well acquainted with all the parties concerned. I have visited the place since receiving your note and took the opportunity of investigating the case in the house where it occurred. I heard an account of the facts from several different persons who were present, and all agree in their statements. To my mind, it is as clear a case as it is possible to conceive of. The natives here all believe most firmly that the woman was possessed of a devil; and that the reading of God's word was the means of its being cast out.

The young man mentioned as having been converted at the time was baptized by Mr. Williamson, and is now one of our junior native helpers. Just now he is here for study during the week, and supplying a station on Sunday. About three years ago I baptized the mother and the elder brother and sister together, so that of a family of six, five are now Christians. But strange to say, the woman who was possessed is not converted, nor is her husband. They both say they believe, but have made no profession. The woman is perfectly well. As I can vouch for the facts, you can make what use you like of this letter, and put my name to it if you wish. The portion of Scriptures read, was the first ten verses of St. John's Gospel."

A translation made by Rev. Wm. A. Wills of the Chinese paper referred to above, was written by Chang Ah-liang.

"At Yang-fu-Miao, forty li (20km) S.E. of Tai-chao, is a family consisting of an elderly woman, two sons, and the elder son's wife; all of whom live together. The eldest son was a zealous Buddhist, and leader in the idolatrous ceremonies in the neighbouring temple; the younger a Christian, and a member of the Tai-chao church.

In June 1876 the son's wife was seized with violent pain in the chest. The Christian brother went to a place seven miles distant, to get advice about it. After his departure she swooned for an hour, then revived and said her husband's first wife (long since dead) had come to take her and her husband away. The friends present were much alarmed, and promised the demon that if it would leave the woman they would call six priests to chant the classics for three days. The answer was: 'Not sufficient.' They then said they would burn a quantity of paper, over which the name of Buddha had been repeated many times. The answer as before was: 'Not sufficient.' The husband brought the classics, chanted several, and placed the book on her heart, hoping by this means to get rid of the demon.

She said: 'You can't get rid of me by this means.' Then a fishing net was spread over the woman, and she said: 'You can't catch me with this.' After several methods had been tried the Christian Brother returned, to whom they related all that had passed. He said to her: 'Why do you talk in this foolish, confused manner.' She replied: 'I am not confused; I am your deceased sister-in-law.' He said: 'You are an evil spirit; leave her!' He read the New Testament to her, but she turned away, and did not want to hear. After two or three verses had been read, she said: 'Your reading pains me to death. Don't read! Don't read. I will go.' The woman then got up and attended to her duties; and until the time I left Tai-chao, at the end of 1878 was well in body and mind. The husband was convinced of the power of God, and professed to believe in Christianity. The neighbours were greatly astonished, and one young man present also believed."

I use the illustration to show that demonic activity is not a first century phenomenon. Unfortunately there was not much published on the subject during the next 50 years after Dr Nevius, a period which saw the some of the most demonic activity in history, as man's inhumanity to man brought the world into bloody conflict. Even more up to date is this story by the author of "Demon Possession and the Christian", C. Fred Dickason²⁰:

"An evangelical pastor in Colorado came suddenly under attack as he was wakened every morning at 3:00 o'clock for many weeks. We checked out his background and circumstances. Though there were suspicious things in his background, we were not convinced that demons were in his life.

We found that the visitations started exactly six months after he and his wife had decided after much prayer to turn down a call to a church in the South. The "visitor" impressed him with the fact that he had missed the will of God and that his ministry would now be disapproved. Knowing that God did not work in such condemnatory fashion, I probed for the presence of wicked spirits. But I found none. I was surprised, since this had all the earmarks of demonic attack.

The Lord led me, I believe, to ask his wife if I might test her condition. I had learned that mental illness and depression had plagued her family: She agreed to allow me. Upon demanding in Christ's name that any spirits present identify themselves, there was a definite response that startled the wife. It was clear and definitely another person, not she, that answered. The demon confessed he came through her ancestral line and that she had not really given him any opportunity to express himself, although he sought to depress her. But he admitted under examination that he had left her body every morning at 3:00 o'clock to harass her pastor husband. He did this to discourage him, keep him from effective service, and force him out of the ministry. We prayed for the wife and for the pastor, binding demons never to do that again. We left confident we

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²⁰ Dr. Charles Fred Dickason is the Former Professor of Theology at the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, IL. Dr. Dickason received his B.S. from Iowa State College in Engineering and a Th.M. and Th.D. from Dallas Theological Seminary.

had found the cause. The pastor wrote me that God had given the victory. The harassment had stopped completely and they were rejoicing in the Lord. Here is another case of a genuine believer, a pastor's wife, being inhabited by a wicked spirit.

Dickason eventually examined 400 cases of demonization. I do not however want to digress into a series of cases studies to show that demonization is as real today as ever it was, merely to show you that there is evidence if you want to search it out. I am proceeding from the position that it is a reality and specifically that it can be associated with our health and well being.

Why some people are demonised and some are not is not explained to us in Scripture but demoniacs are all part of the plan and purpose of God. There is the natural predisposition to evil through sin, and there is the possible additional personal control by spirit entities, demons. The fact is that every human starts life predisposed to do evil to a greater or lesser extent. Eph 2:2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Eph 2:3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. Can we assume that this spirit no longer works in the children of obedience, only in the children of disobedience? That requires explanation.

In what sense does satan work in us when we are unregenerate? Is it the same as now, because we know that satan still influences us if he gets a chance, 2Co 2:11 Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices. How did satan work in us? That is a question that has not been answered very well and there is a tendency to skip over what it and its implications are. I think we should review just what has occurred in our 'spiritual' lives up to this point in order to clarify this? Let us go back to the beginning of our journey of faith.

At one time we were unbelievers in the sense that we either were totally atheistic (believed in no God at all) or agnostic (ignorant of God). We lived in a world that we were told was gathered together by strange forces over billions of years. In one of those years the Sun sparked into life and a process of development began where atoms organised themselves into creatures that one day turned into you and I. There was no need for God in the Universe that we had been brought up into. We picked up bits of religion from parents, school or Sunday school but it was part of the tradition of our lives. We had no faith in it.

One day, an invisible person appears on our horizon who is called Jesus. We generally did not like what He said about us although we may have grudgingly conceded that He was a good person but all that religious stuff was not for us. No thanks. Then He comes knocking again, the invisible man arrives again at some crisis or other in our lives and we take it all a bit more seriously. We are looking for something but not quite sure what, perhaps some sort of religious experience of God, to give us meaning and stability in our lives. We listen to various solutions and the claims of Jesus Christ are presented to us. Being mostly ignorant of the source of information about Jesus, the Bible, we are very much at the mercy of the people presenting it.

This is an important point in our journey because we could be led into error for the rest of our lives. We might get told to fall in line with an organisation, get baptised into an institutional church, do a

series of Bible studies aimed at locking us into a pattern of belief, listen to interminable sermons at a weekly ritual meeting. It is rare to be told, "You go off and read the Bible for yourself and do what it tells you". "You go and find Christ for yourself". Religion is steered by people towards people. I was never encouraged to build my personal relationship with Christ. I was told "what we believe" by the church, never once go out and search for yourself. When I eventually did this, I was told that I was a trouble maker. Being in a church was more about getting group approval than finding truth in Christ.

There is a very simplistic approach to becoming a Christian. It is "give your heart to Jesus" and everything is solved. Billy Graham suggested, "Any person who is willing to trust Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour and Lord can receive the new birth now." Of course, the forgiveness of sin is in there somewhere but the depths of sin and the suffering of Christ are not fully realised. It is as if all you have to do is "accept Jesus into your life" and God will download a whole new lot of software into your life that will instantly transform you. We like to see ourselves as new Creatures, born again, a new man, indwelt by the Spirit, blood washed, forgiven, justified, at peace with God and so on. Then we sin and we learn something that they left out of the sales pitch about becoming a Christian. Why is it that I do these things? I thought I had been delivered from all of that? Our birthright has been corrupted.

Have we been sold a simplistic Gospel, a fairy tale? The real world, the world of Principalities and Powers, the ongoing fight with sin and the devil, the role that we would have to play in the battle were not fully revealed to us. When we changed our allegiance from satan to Christ, there were consequences that would follow us through life. Did we really sign up to that? As we continue, we shall look at the reality of the Christian life and how demonization is a part of that conflict with evil.

14. Who are you following?

We have been considering how people come to Christ and what is generally expected of us. The purpose of this exercise is to understand what we can expect in our earthly pilgrimage, what trials, tribulations, sickness, health and most importantly what we can expect in our relationship with Jesus. The simplistic approach adopted in many churches is I think unrealistic. This was brought home to me after our last meeting when I was viewing a choir competition. Some of the school choirs came from religious schools. One scene showed some catholic children seated around a wooden altar and an authority figure dressed in a long white robe making a sign of a cross with his hands. They were all sitting comfortably with this and the likelihood is that they would for life. They had been indoctrinated into a system that most would never question and I would suggest that is true of most people who make a claim to Christ.

It seems that providing people accept the group mentality in the church, get baptised and make a profession of faith, little more is asked than to attend regular worship and Bible studies. Here is some spiel from a local group, "Welcome to our church - we hope that we can be a blessing to each other. We are a friendly group of people who come from a whole variety of backgrounds". What is the mission? It is "Knowing God".

With that vague statement we could probably encompass most of the world religions and that is my point. It is about "churches" and "God", a very broad concept, not Christ, an identifiable person. It is

little different to being a Jehovah's Witness, joining the Watchtower society, and being conformed to their view of "God". When you fall into the group conformity, it will not be long before you lose the ability to reason for yourself, let alone be able to renew your mind. Yet it should be about Jesus Christ and only Christ. Php 3:10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; Php 3:11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Php 3:12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. If you or I want anything for mankind it must be that they know Christ and that they find HIM.

Not everyone has the same "experience" when they first come into contact with Christ. What happens after that first contact is very much left to the individual to decide what they want to do. In most cases, it is as little as possible. As little Bible study, as little devotion, as little time, as little commitment, as little personal change, the minimum that you can get away with and still convince yourself that you are a believer. No one is prepared to suggest what you should do when "you are saved", as they are afraid of scaring you away. Churches end up with a mix of people at different levels of development, with opinions as to what God says, some based on Scripture and some a compromise with their unchristian life experience. Everyone is allowed to have their opinion as long as it does not disrupt the church.

I recall when I was baptised as a believer, that the dear old pastor did his due diligence and checked on the each of the 9 candidates to confirm that they had made a genuine commitment and that they understood what they were doing. Years later, unfortunately, one of the couples ended up divorced but I am not sure what happened to the others. It is quite clear that no matter what checks you would like to invent, it is very difficult to predict where someone will be in a few years time. The parable of the sower makes that quite clear.

I knew another couple that stated with enthusiasm, did all the right things and they eventually walked away from the faith and each other. I knew another man who threw in the towel after a few years. Another poor brother suffered depression and was on a drug regime. He collapsed one day and fell into a fire. When he awoke one arm had been burned to a stump (he was a flute palyer!). I could make a list of problems that I have seen and it is clear that "coming" to Christ does not lead to an easy life. It is probably true for most of us, that the expectations created by the people that led us to Christ, were far more optimistic than they should have been, as far as solving all life's problems. Many become disillusioned, depressed and just give up as the world strangles the life out of them. We expected that sin would no longer afflict us but it does. We expected to be completely changed characters yet we see those old traits bursting through our façade. We expected to be good people but instead we see more hypocrisy than good. We had an expectation to be like Jesus but the more we look at ourselves the further away we seem to be from that ideal. That little voice pipes up in your head that you are a failure and that you cannot be a Christian.

Why are our expectations disappointed? There are a number of reasons for this, the first being that we were not given a proper description of the Christian life. Peter lays it out in his first Epistle. 1Pe 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 1Pe 1:4

To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, 1Pe 1:5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 1Pe 1:6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: 1Pe 1:7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: 1Pe 1:8 Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: 1Pe 1:9 Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

Our faith in Christ will be tested and we must expect that. Peter goes so far to describe this trial as far more valuable than Gold, that in comparison is a perishable asset. When you make a profession of faith in Christ, that faith will be put on trial. Knowing this should put us on our guard and make us prepared for what will come. Life will get tough as a believer but knowing that is part of the reality of our faith. The real Christianity is not a soft option it is a hard road and here is why.

- Mat 5:10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Mat 5:11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Mat 5:12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. John 15:18 If the world hate you, you know that it hated me before it hated you.
- John 15:20 Remember the word that I said to you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.
- Romans 8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? **shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword**?
- 1 Corinthians 4:12 And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it:
- 2 Corinthians 12:10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.
- 1 Thessalonians 3:4 For truly, when we were with you, we told you before that **we should** suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and you know.
- 2 Timothy 3:12 Yes, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.
- Hebrews 10:33 Partly, whilst you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and afflictions;
 and partly, whilst you became companions of them that were so used.
- 1Pe 4:12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: 1Pe 4:13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

No one told me about those things but according to Peter it is nothing strange for a Christian, "as though some strange thing happened unto you". When difficult dark days come, clouds over your horizon, just remember that is what you were told would happen. So it makes a lot of sense to prepare for those days by developing our relationship with Christ. When the winds of change blow

on our lives it shows us how good our relationship with Christ really is, Mat 7:24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: Mat 7:25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

What sort of person should I become? Many think that as long as you live a good life, throw in a bit of charity, be nice to others and go to church you are going to be all right when you get to the end of life. There is a story told by Siegfried Sassoon, the Great War poet. When he was brought back to London after being wounded on the Western Front, his stretcher was taken off of the train at Charing Cross Station, where "a woman handed me a bunch of flowers and a leaflet by the Bishop of London who earnestly advised me to lead a clean life and attend Holy Communion." That probably sums up what most church goers think is required. That is probably what most ministers expect.

It is not sufficient to drift away on a Christian odyssey like a piece of wood swept along by the current of life. It is not discipleship to keep one foot in the world and another in the kingdom. 1Pe 1:13 Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 1Pe 1:14 As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: 1Pe 1:15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; 1Pe 1:16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. 1Pe 1:17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear: 1Pe 1:18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; 1Pe 1:19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

I must become a new creature, 2Co 5:17 So that if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new! LITV. I must get rid of my old life, Col 3:8 But now, you also, put off all these things: wrath, anger, malice, evil-speaking, shameful speech out of your mouth. Col 3:9 Do not lie to one another, having put off the old man with his practices, Col 3:10 and having put on the new, having been renewed in full knowledge according to the image of the One creating him, LITV.

I must change and be changed because my wicked heart must be replaced. Mat 15:18 But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. Mat 15:19 For **out of the heart proceed** evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: Mat 15:20 These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man. The heart beats to the devil's tunes and out of those rhythms come all manner of evil.

Paul sums up these actions that come out of our "hearts" as "works of the flesh". *Gal 5:19 Now the works of the flesh* are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, *Gal 5:20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Gal 5:21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.* We cannot take that old nature with us and expect to get into God's Kingdom. We have a battle with the flesh.

What do we mean by the "flesh"? I think that 'God's Word' translates the idea well. The "flesh" is our "corrupt nature". Rom 7:5 While we were living under the influence of our corrupt nature, sinful passions were at work throughout our bodies. Stirred up by Moses' laws, our sinful passions did things that result in death. GW. Rom 8:4 Therefore, we, who do not live by our corrupt nature but by our spiritual nature, are able to meet God's standards. Rom 8:5 Those who live by the corrupt nature have the corrupt nature's attitude. But those who live by the spiritual nature have the spiritual nature's attitude. GW.

Here the battleground is laid bare. It is a battle against our "corrupt nature" as Paul says, Gal 5:16 Let me explain further. Live your life as your spiritual nature directs you. Then you will never follow through on what your corrupt nature wants. Gal 5:17 What your corrupt nature wants is contrary to what your spiritual nature wants, and what your spiritual nature wants is contrary to what your corrupt nature wants. They are opposed to each other. As a result, you don't always do what you intend to do. Gal 5:18 If your spiritual nature is your guide, you are not subject to Moses' laws. Gal 5:19 Now, the effects of the corrupt nature are obvious: illicit sex, perversion, promiscuity, Gal 5:20 idolatry, drug use, hatred, rivalry, jealousy, angry outbursts, selfish ambition, conflict, factions, Gal 5:21 envy, drunkenness, wild partying, and similar things. I've told you in the past and I'm telling you again that people who do these kinds of things will not inherit the Kingdom of God. Gal 5:22 But the spiritual nature produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, GW.

If we thought that justification by faith, salvation in Christ, were all handed over to us and all accomplished **in us** when we think that we came to Christ we must think again. There is a chasm separating the imputed righteousness of Christ and the imparted righteousness of Christ. There is a lifetime of discipleship to outwork between the imputed merits of Jesus' saving work and the complete imparting of that Divine nature into our new life. We must grow in grace, 2Pe 3:18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen. We are still sinners and if we deny this we are liars. 1Jn 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 1Jn 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1Jn 1:10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

When we are confronted with the claims of Christ, we face a choice, to accept or to reject them. If the Spirit of God so works in our lives, we have our eyes open to a whole new realm. It is here the conflict with evil is made manifest. From the moment that we trust Christ, we are dragged into a battle with our old master. Formerly, Paul tells us, *Eph 2:2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Eph 2:3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*

The GW version puts it like this, Eph 2:2 You followed the ways of this present world and its spiritual ruler. This ruler continues to work in people who refuse to obey God. Eph 2:3 All of us once lived among these people, and followed the desires of our corrupt nature. We did what our corrupt desires and thoughts wanted us to do. So, because of our nature, we deserved God's anger just like everyone

else. In other words, as unbelievers our corrupt nature followed the dictates of satan. We were influenced by the devil and encouraged to disobey our Creator. We are now encouraged to resist our old slave master, satan, and serve our new master Jesus.

That old master, the devil, will still assault us at every opportunity because I believe that he wants us back. The idea that God would protect us totally from satan's influence so that we could live worldly lives an unfounded assumption. Why would He do that? Why would we expect to be delivered from sin and its power to be allowed to continue to live sinful lives? Col 1:13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: Col 1:14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: That security comes with the condition that we continue the path that we started upon. Col 1:23 If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

If we claim to be saved, we will work out that salvation. *Php 2:12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.* It will be our life work to make sure that we secure the sure promises of Christ. Set against us will be the forces of darkness, taking every opportunity to bring us back to what we were. We will see this dark hand trying to undermine our lives:

- Victims of bad leadership (collateral damage): 1Ch 21:1 And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel...... 1Ch 21:14 So the LORD sent pestilence upon Israel: and there fell of Israel seventy thousand men.
- **Test our faith**: Job 1:7 And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.
- **Encourages deceit**: Act:5:3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?
- **Sexual sins**: 1Co 7:5 Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.
- **Bitterness**: 2Co 2:10 To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; 2Co 2:11 Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.
- False beliefs: 2Co 11:13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. 2Co 11:14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.
- **Anger:** Eph 4:26 Be angry without sinning. Don't go to bed angry. Eph 4:27 Don't give the devil any opportunity to work. GW.
- **Fellowship:** 1Th 2:18 Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.

- **Ability to minister**: 1Ti 3:6 Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. 1Ti 3:7 Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.
- Infirmity: 2Co 12:7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

The last example takes us to the issues of health although some of the other issues will also affect the state of our physical well being, such as anger, bitterness and sexual sins.

For now, I have attempted to illustrate that the life of a disciple is very much a work in process. A work that is constantly assaulted by evil with the sole aim of bringing us down. It is for this reason that we tread carefully, 1Co 10:12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. 1Co 10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

15. God's maggots

We have suggested that satan will take every opportunity to attack Christians. These attacks may be the result of someone else's sin (David's disobedience), A trial of faith (Job), personal sin (Ananias, with Sapphira), sanctification (Paul's thorn), or some reason known only to the Lord. The term that we have used to describe this phenomenon is "demonization". We have suggested that during Jesus ministry He dealt with one case where it was clear that the woman was considered a believer, a daughter of Abraham, Luk 13:16 And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day? Jesus had no problem touching her so there was no problem in contact with someone demonized, Luk 13:13 And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

I also observe in passing that Jesus did not offer her forgiveness, so I do not see that it was some personal sin that brought her low. I digress slightly but it made me think that if believers could be demonized, what does that say about the condition of those Jews who Jesus exorcised? Are we suggesting that all the Jews who were demonised were unbelievers? That is far from proven. Perhaps the idea lingers, that because demons were "cast out", that they were somehow resident "within" the individual (whatever that might mean), controlling their whole lives but as we have seen, people can have part of their body controlled and not all of the body (the lame and blind man).

The term "cast out" is made up of the preposition out (ek) and the word for throw (ballo) whence the word ballistic. Mar 1:34 And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out (ἐκβάλλω = ekballō) many devils (δαιμόνιον = daimonion = demon); and suffered not the devils (δαιμόνιον = daimonion = demon) to speak, because they knew him. The word is also translated "send forth" Mat 9:38 Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth (ἑκβάλλω = ekballō) labourers into his harvest. Mat 12:20 A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth (ἑκβάλλω = ekballō) judgment unto victory. Mat 12:35 A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth (ἑκβάλλω = ekballō) good things: and an

evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth (ἐκβάλλω = ekballō) evil things. Demons can be "sent forth" or "brought forth" from a person afflicted or perhaps "infected" by demons. It begs the question as to where these demons who are brought forth go to when driven away.

If I am right that believers can be demonised, then Jesus brought to light a huge problem in the Church of Israel, a problem that the Jews had failed to control. It is also clear that demons were at work long before the time of Jesus. Job 2:3 And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.

Are we going to deny that Job was a believer? If that were the case, why would satan even bother to put him on trial? He would already have been victorious in Job's life but that was not the case. Thank God that we have the story of Job because it so enriches our understanding of satanic attack. Was Job an unfortunate isolated victim of the devil, an extreme example of affliction or was he one among many? We no doubt do not like to think that the life of a believer should be so marred with affliction but I do not believe that he was alone. These stories suggest that the apostles of Christ were all tested sorely.

- Simon-Peter was eventually martyred in Rome during the reign of the emperor Nero. As the story goes, Peter asked to be crucified upside down, so that his death would not be the equal of Jesus and the Romans supposedly obliged.
- Andrew: went to Patras in western Greece in 69 AD, where the Roman proconsul Aegeates
 debated religion with him. Aegeates tried to convince Andrew to forsake Christianity, so that
 he would not have to torture and execute him. Andrew was scourged, and then tied rather
 than nailed to a cross, so that he would suffer for a longer time before dying. Andrew lived
 for two days, during which he preached to passersby.
- James (son of Zebedee): Acts 12:1-19 says that James was killed with a sword.
- John: was the only one of the original disciples not to die a violent death. Instead, he passed away peacefully in Patmos albeit a prisoner in his old age, sometime around 100 AD.
- Philip, the first of Jesus' disciples, became a missionary in Asia. Eventually, he travelled to the Egyptian city of Heliopolis, where he was scourged, thrown into prison, and crucified in 54 AD.
- Bartholomew supposedly preached in several countries, including India, where he translated
 the Gospel of Matthew for believers. In one account, "impatient idolaters" beat
 Bartholomew and then crucified him, while in another, he was skinned alive and then
 beheaded.
- Thomas preached the gospel in Greece and India, where he angered local religious authorities, who martyred him by running him through with a spear.
- Matthew was martyred in Ethiopia, where he was supposedly stabbed in the back by a swordsman sent by King Hertacus, after he criticized the king's morals.
- James son of Alphaeus was elected by his fellow believers to head the churches of Jerusalem, was one of the longest-lived apostles, perhaps exceeded only by John. At the age of 94, he was beaten and stoned by persecutors, and then killed him by hitting him on the head with a club.

- Thaddaeus, Lebbaeus, Judas or Jude was crucified at Edessa (the name of cities in both Turkey and Greece) in 72 AD.
- Simon the Canaanite preached in Mauritania on the west coast of Africa, and then went to England, where he was crucified in 74 AD.
- Paul's death occurred after his fifth missionary journey ended in 67 A.D. Paul was likely beheaded by the Romans, under Emperor Nero, sometime around May or June of 68 A.D

Those men had options. They could have walked away and lived relatively quiet lives. They could have denied Christ to avoid the severe and painful deaths which they suffered, but they did not. That tells me that they were not so concerned with saving their flesh, as with saving their souls. They had learned, Mat 10:28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. So perhaps when Christ's closest followers get to end life in some horrific manner, it should make us take a new look at our own suffering and perhaps ask why we should not suffer in this life? We might hear Christ say to us "I died for you, the least you can do is die for me?" or better, "Live for me".

Job was singled out from humanity for special mention but I do not think that satan walked the earth as a sightseer. Job 1:7 And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. When he gets into Job's life, he takes control of everything, his goods, his house, his children, his marriage and his health. Job 2:7 So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. Job suffered a physical infection and he did not know why. The so called "comforters" had no clue at all why he sat in the ashes and they should better be known as Job's accusers. They were indeed the "devil's advocates".

Job was held captive by satan for a period, Job 42:10 And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before. Job 42:11 Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold. Job 42:12 So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: What lessons might this teach us? While satan was the second cause, the evil is attributed to Jehovah. We do not have to defend the Creator when His critics say He can do no evil, He says that He does. When He does, it will often involve the spirits who are opposed to Him. He uses their malice as the refining fire in the life of a saint.

It served a purpose in that it showed the powers of evil, that there are those who will endure suffering and not lose faith in their Creator. It illustrates that all things work for good, Rom 8:28 For we knowe yt all thinges worke for the best, vnto them that loue God, to them which also are called of purpose. Bishop's Bible. It shows that although God's love appears to have drained away, it will flood back in victory. Thinking of Job caused me to wonder how many others came under the devil's hand and gave up the faith. How many walked away, like Demas, 2Ti 4:10 For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. This same Demas who with Luke once greeted the brethren, Col 4:14 Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you. Now sadly and possibly forever, gone from the faith.

Others like Peter fail the test and deny the Lord but by His grace are drawn back, chastened but stronger.

One of the ever present dangers facing Christians is to think that they are above reproach. That they live such good lives that nothing bad could happen to them, although they are quick to see evils and the consequences of evil in others. Yet pause for a moment and consider what thing you have thought, said or done today that was sinful. The evil that we still concoct in our own hearts is incompatible with the nature of Christ and more compatible with the nature of satan, yet we will continue to deny that satan can have any influence over us. We are foolish if we believe that we are exempt or beyond demonization. I came across this statement by John MacArthur:

There is no clear example in the Bible where a demon ever inhabited or invaded a true believer. Never in the New Testament epistles are believers warned about the possibility of being inhabited by demons. Neither do we see anyone rebuking, binding, or casting demons out of a true believer. The epistles never instruct believers to cast out demons, whether from a believer or unbeliever. Christ and the apostles were the only ones who cast out demons, and in every instance the demon-possessed people were unbelievers.

He has not defined his terms and we have dismissed "possession" in favour of "demonization". We are not talking about being 'inhabited', indeed the damage can be done without being inhabited. The devil smote Job and departed to leave him with the problem of boils. There are as we have shown evidences that believers can be demonized and to deny this is to deny what happened to Job and Paul. It is just this shallow approach that will leave believers bewildered as to why some evil circumstances occur in their lives.

He is also wrong to say it was **only** Christ and the Apostles who "cast out" demons. Luk 9:49 And John answered and said, Master, **we saw one casting out devils in thy name**; and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us. Luk 9:50 And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us. I love it when the Lord breaks our exclusion zones. Num 11:26 But there remained two of the men in the camp, the name of the one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad: and the spirit rested upon them; and they were of them that were written, but went not out unto the tabernacle: and they prophesied in the camp (read the story).

Also, many people who think that they are believers and are not can cast out demons, *Mat 7:22* Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? Mat 7:23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

There are also times when the church has a duty to discipline believers and that involves delivering a person to satan. 1Co 5:5 hand such a person over to Satan to destroy his corrupt nature so that his spiritual nature may be saved on the day of the Lord. GW. 1Ti 1:19 Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: 1Ti 1:20 Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme. It is not just an Apostolic duty, it is a church duty, 1Co 5:7 cleanse out, therefore, the old

leaven, that ye may be a new lump, according as ye are unleavened, for also our passover for us was sacrificed—Christ.

This measure is not for the purpose of disposing of sinning believers, dumping the problem, to the contrary it is a desperate measure to salvage something from their faltering life. It is a bit like maggot therapy²¹.

Maggots are efficient consumers of dead tissue. They munch on rotting flesh, leaving healthy tissue practically unscathed. Physicians in Napoleon's army used the larvae to clean wounds. In World War I, American surgeon William Baer noticed that soldiers with maggot-infested gashes didn't have the expected infection or swelling seen in other patients. The rise of penicillin in the 1940s made clinical maggots less useful, but they bounced back in the 1990s when antibiotic-resistant bacteria created a new demand for alternative treatments. In 2004, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved maggot therapy as a prescription treatment.

The flesh that is corrupt is taken away by exposure to satan's activities that consume it but that which is of Christ remains in Christ. Something is recoverable and something may be saved. I will venture to suggest that demons are God's maggots that thrive in a sea of corruption. There is nothing wholesome in satan's camp, there are no sweet perfumes, no sweet incense only putrefaction. It is no wonder that he is called lord of the flies, Baalzebub. 2Ki 1:2 And Ahaziah fell down through a lattice in his upper chamber that was in Samaria, and was sick: and he sent messengers, and said unto them, Go, enquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron whether I shall recover of this disease. 2Ki 1:3 But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say unto them, Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to enquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron?

We see that every time the devil, as a cause, is removed from the lives of people afflicted with infirmities, they are restored to health. When the devil goes the disease goes. There is some truth in that statement that "cleanliness is next to godliness".

I will go further to suggest that the devil and his maggots cannot swallow the good. They brought out the putrefaction in Job's life, the boils on the outside and the sin on the inside and when it was all done and dealt with, he was a refined man. Job 23:10 But he knoweth my way, and has tried me as gold that passeth through the fire: DRB. The gold was there amidst the dross of life and it was necessary to remove the dross to appreciate the gold. This Job knew. While the devil could try him, the devil could not take away the gold. In fact the action of satan just polished the gold.

It is not an option for churches to do nothing and ignore sin when it arises in its members. It is not gracious to pass over something that will corrupt the body of believers. It is not love covering a multitude of sins to let a sinner run on in sin. Jas 5:20 Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins. I have seldom seen churches apply this measure, to deliver to satan. Instead, they distance themselves

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²¹ http://www.sciencemag.org/news/2012/12/how-maggots-heal-wounds

from the problem, and discard it. They are more interested in preserving their holy huddle than in recovering the sinner.

It should not seem strange to us that satan can be used in this way. It is something the Lord does, 1Ki 22:22 And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth, and do so. It seems paradoxical but it is there in the Scripture.

Knowing then that we have such an enemy as satan and his demons, why is 'deliverance' so low down on our prayer list? We were shown a model of prayer and the petition for deliverance is just before the 'amen'. Deliver us from the evil one. *Mat 6:13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil* ($\tau o \tilde{v} \pi o v \eta \rho o \tilde{v} = the evil$): For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. In that single verse we are reminded that being put to the test is a daily reality as is deliverance from the evil one.

I still have a few more issues to cover on this subject of demonization. The rise of pornography, the wider impact of principalities and powers on communities and how do we deal with removing demons.

16. Pornography and demons

There are three further subjects that I want to address that will affect the health of Christians.

- 1. The rise of pornography
- 2. The wider impact of principalities and powers on communities and
- 3. How do we deal with removing demons.

I was surprised to find recently, the claim that dating applications (APPS) have increased the rate of sexually transmitted diseases. The reason given is that the ease of finding sexual partners also increases the rate of turnover of partners. The consequent increase in both disease spread and virulence is a major health issue. Twenty years ago, access to pornography was much more limited, confined to the 'top shelves' of newsagents and sleazy clubs and bars. Of course, it has been around far longer than that, going back to the ancient world. I recall during the 1960's, during the school holiday, working for a building firm in Dorchester (Dorset). We were clearing out an old Chemist shop that was being developed into offices and came across a hoard of large glass negatives taken by an old glass plate camera. Some of the images were of the great and the good, posing at the turn of the last century (early 1900's). Others were pornographic images of men and women engaged in various sexual activities. In an age where society tried to show an outward moral uprightness, there was a rotten core.

Today, by courtesy of Information Technology, access to all sorts of sexual imagery is one click away. This article describes the problem²².

It probably won't come as much of a surprise to you when I say that the porn industry generates about \$13 billion each year in the United States. It's a heartbreaking reality that 9 out of 10 boys and 6 out of 10 girls have been exposed to pornography before the

²² http://www.co<u>venanteyes.com/pornstats/</u>

age of 18; the average age of first exposure is about 11 years old and that men are 543% more likely to look at porn than women. Unfortunately, the secret is out. It's become a sad reality that our world is obsessed with sex and pornography. And it's not just a problem with those in the world but also those who consider themselves not of this world.

A survey taken at a Promise Keepers rally revealed that over 50% of the men in attendance were involved with pornography within one week of attending the event. **And that was 20 years ago.**

Covenant Eyes²³ is a web filtering support company and George Barna has undertaken a study for them. This is what they found.

The Barna study included 527 people who have used Covenant Eyes for more than 5 years. Many of them use it for protection of their families, and many use it because they want accountability to help them through the struggle.

Definition of porn: Among those who use porn, only less than 1/3rd of general population adults thought fully nude dancing, fully nude still pictures, sex scenes in a written story, texting about sexual acts with someone you don't know, or partially nude show constitute porn; over 2/3rd of Covenant Eyes users who have sought out porn considers those things as porn. Covenant Eyes users either originally had, or have grown to have, a more sensitive understanding of what constitutes porn. **Addictive nature of porn:** Among users of porn, only 55% of general population adults think porn is "definitely" addictive; 94% of Covenant Eyes users think so.

Sexting: Covenant Eyes teens and young adults are $1/3^{rd}$ as likely to have sent a nude image over the Internet. Fifty percent of Christian men and 20% of Christian women say they are addicted to pornography. And the most popular day of the week for viewing porn is Sunday.

Right now as I speak, 30,000 people are watching porn and new porn video is produced every 39 minutes. I could lay out many more statistics but the issue is why? Why are people getting involved in pornography and particularly those who are professing Christians and ministers? It is because it produces sexual gratification to feed a craving and there is a huge market to satiate. Where does that desire come from and can we overcome it? The desire is lust and as Jesus said to the Pharisees, it comes from the devil into our hearts. Joh 8:44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.

It is an age old problem. Pro 6:23 For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life: Pro 6:24 To keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman. Pro 6:25 Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids. Pro 6:26 For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of

Job 31:1 I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid? Job 31:1 "I have made an agreement with my eyes. Then how can I look with lust at a virgin? GW.

²³ http://www.covenanteyes.com/family/

bread: and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life. 1Jn 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

This is a bold and honest testimony from a Christian brother who has been dealing with the problem²⁴.

I came to faith in Christ in my late teens. Before I became a Christian, and for a short time after I became a Christian, I was exposed to hard-core XXX-rated pornography. I know God even uses evil experiences to enable you to minister to others. But, if I could change one thing about my past, it would be my viewing of pornography. Some of the images are literally seared into my brain. The images function like annoying internet pop-up windows. They display themselves in my mind even though I do not want them to, and they are very difficult to close once they are open.

Thankfully, over the past 18 years that I have been a Christian, and especially over the past 14 years I have been married, God has enabled me to overcome the temptation to look at pornography. I am not claiming to have been 100% victorious over that time period, but my failings have been very few and very far between. In a sense, a ministry that requires me to spend 10+ hours a day online is not an ideal fit for someone who has a past with pornography. But, to God be the glory, He gives me the victory.

If pornography is so obviously heinously sinful, why is it such a temptation? I would point to three primary reasons, each of them **demonic in origin**.

First, I would say that the demons know how powerfully addictive and destructive porn can be. Therefore, they actively tempt people into a sin that will be an ongoing hindrance to their relationship with God.

Second, the demons love using pornography to create guilt and shame in a person, even to the point that the person doubts God's love for him/her and questions his/her salvation.

Third, the demons know the value God places on marriage and family. Pornography wreaks havoc on marriages and family. The demons can produce multi-generational damage on a family through one person's addiction to pornography.

Another writer describes pornography like this, "When a person looks at pornography, they are not simply looking at sex acts between mixed and matched groups of people. Whosoever wilfully watches pornography for the intended sexual stimulation, is doing the same thing as handing entry keys to their mind, heart, body and soul over to satan." The Bible makes it clear that 'mind sex' is no different to physical sexual relations, Mat 5:27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: Mat 5:28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

Fornication, however it is induced, is a peculiar and in some sense a unique sin. 1Co 6:18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication

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http://www.blogos.org/gotquestions/pornography-sin.html Is looking at pornography a sin? By S. Michael Houdmann, Got Questions Ministries.

sinneth against his own body. 1Co 6:18 Stay away from sexual sins. Other sins that people commit don't affect their bodies the same way sexual sins do. People who sin sexually sin against their own bodies. 1Co 6:19 Don't you know that your body is a temple that belongs to the Holy Spirit? GW. Pornography is fornication in the mind and it is a sin against the body.

Surely you will say, all sins are outside of the body in so far that the objects of sin are external and your will say all sins have their origin within the body, in the mind? Temptations come from without and assault the senses within. So how can fornication be a sin against the body? It is not said of fornication that it is not stimulated outside, or that it, alone of sins, assails the body, but that it is peculiarly a sin against the body.

It defiles a body which is designed to be a member of Christ, and a temple of the Holy Spirit; separates it from the union with Christ, and unites it with a harlot. The grievousness of the sin is in the desecration to such an unholy purpose of a body which has become a member of Christ, a part of the temple of God. The fornicator takes his body which belongs to Christ and unites it with a harlot. In fornication the body is the instrument of sin and becomes the subject of the damage wrought.

Why would we suggest that pornography would be high on the devil's agenda to target Christians? I think that the devil's works to destroy marriages. You may remember "Friends Reunited". I called it "Fiends Untied". The website closed in February this year (2016) after 16 years of breaking up marriages. A news article back in 2004 had this to say²⁵:

Internet sites such as Friends Reunited are unwittingly fuelling a surge in marital breakup as bored husbands and wives contact old flames, relationship counsellors warned as official figures showed divorce has reached a seven-year high.

The marriage guidance body Relate said Britain's long working hours and ease of internet access provided increasing opportunity for a disaffected spouse to seek out an alternative relationship. It was easier than ever for one or both partners to find an excuse to stay late at the office - or log on to the internet to scan for romance - instead of sorting out the emotional problems of the marriage.

Christine Northam, a spokeswoman for Relate, said: "A lot of people have a rosy impression of the first relationship they had at school or college. If they are feeling unhappy with their partner, they begin wondering what it would have been like if they'd stayed with the old flame. Friends Reunited makes it possible to get back in contact with old classmates. It doesn't cause breakdowns, but for those who were scanning for another relationship, it's a nice way of doing it. You make contact, you meet and Bob's your uncle."

The devil wants us to become dissatisfied with our relationships and break our marriages. How does porn affect a marriage²⁶? Here is what Beth and Wesley Wiley have to say:

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²⁵ https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2004/sep/01/johncarvel

First of all, it's sin. I'm not trying to be a fundamentalist, but we need to call it what it is. I heard a pastor say once that anytime we choose to sin, something dies. Here are nine side-effects of pornography.

- 1. Porn Breaks Trust. Marriages are built on trust. Ask a woman how she feels when her husband looks at porn and if she's honest she hates it. She'll say it feels like he is bringing other women into the relationship. And whether the man likes that or not she's right. It's infidelity.
- 2. Porn Creates Comparisons. You can't look at images without comparing those images to your spouse. This can lead to ungratefulness, where you focus on what your spouse "isn't" instead of being thankful for what he/she is.
- 3. Porn Destroys Self-Esteem. Just ask your spouse how confident they feel being naked in front of you after you've looked at pornography and you'll understand this one.
- 4. Porn Creates Unreal Expectations. Porn is not reality! It's a movie created by a director and paid actors who...hate to burst your bubble...are acting! It's not real! And guess what, most of them hate it. Many of the female actors were coerced into the film industry at a very young age outside of their will. A high number of female actors take drugs to cope with both the physical pain of filming and the emotional pain. The suicide rate is high among both male and female actors.
- 5. Porn Destroys Intimacy. Porn in a marriage is usually very secretive. The one looking doesn't want the other spouse to know. The result is a lack of intimacy as one spouse is keeping secrets from the other.
- 6. Porn Creates Shame. The enemy tempts us to look, and when we do, he tells us what a loser we are for looking. Shame is one of the worst side effects of porn. Because people often look at porn to escape stress or fear, it creates a downward spiral that goes like this. a. Feel bad about your life. b. Look at porn to escape. c. Feel bad about your life for looking at porn. d. Look at more to escape.
- 7. Porn is Addictive. Anyone who tells you it isn't is wrong. Studies show that porn lights up the pleasure centre of the brain more than cocaine. It's powerful and it's very addictive.
- 8. Porn Never Satisfies. The porn industry thrives on "customer dissatisfaction." I heard a podcast explain the difference between sexual addiction and drug addiction. They stated that the drug addict craves "more" but the sexual addict craves "different." In other words, a heroin addict wants more heroin. But a sex addict doesn't just want more sex, he wants "different" sex.
 - The power behind porn is lust. And lust doesn't crave "prettier" it craves "different." It's why Tiger Woods can be married to a super model and still cheat with numerous other women. It's not that his wife wasn't "attractive enough," it's just that lust always craves "different." The deception is that "different" will satisfy

²⁶ 9 Reasons Why Porn Will Ruin Your Marriage http://www.debttolife.com/9-reasons-why-porn-will-ruin-your-marriage

- you, but of course, once you have what you craved you want something different. It never ends.
- 9. Porn is Progressively Perverse. Due to its inability to satisfy, pornography always leads one to greater perversity. We hear these horrible stories on the news about acts committed against children, even toddlers, and we try to wrap our minds around how someone could be so warped to do something so sick.

One of Ted Bundy's²⁷ final murders was that of a 12 year old girl. The day before he was executed he asked Dr. James Dobson to interview him. What's incredible about his story is that he states his behaviour was rooted in a porn addiction that started when he found soft-core magazines in the trash as a 13 year old boy.

What's truly frightening is that 13 year old boys today don't have to look in the trash. They just turn on their phone.

The destruction of marriage and the abuse encouraged by pornography defile the Biblical standards of chastity and marriage, thereby also undermining the relationship the Christ would show the world. The relationship between man and woman typifies Christ and the Church. Pornography is a perversion of godly relationships.

If you remember the trial of the Creationist Kent Hovind in America, you get a glimpse at the perversion amongst their judiciary. The prosecution of Kent Hovind was led by Michelle M. Heldmyer, U.S. Attorney, and J.D. Roy Atchison, assistant U.S. Attorney. In 1993, Judge Richard Kreidler committed suicide when he was caught and charged with the crime of purchasing illegal pornographic materials. The following year, in May 1994, Michelle Heldmyer, now the U.S. Attorney, made national news when it was found that her husband Joseph Heldmyer was on the same pornographic mailing list as the judge. He was never prosecuted.

At Kent's trial, Margaret Casey Rodgers, the presiding judge over the case, allegedly said, "Kent Hovind's crime is worse than rape!" Did the judge know that the prosecutor was a rapist? Just a few days after Kent Hovind's trial, this assistant U.S. attorney, J.D. Roy Atchison, was caught, arrested and jailed for attempting to rape a five-year-old. On September 16, 2007, Atchison was arrested at the Detroit Metropolitan Airport in a sex crime sting operation undertaken by the Macomb County Sheriff's department. He was charged with "enticement of a minor to engage in sexual activity using the Internet. On October 5, 2007, US attorney Atchison committed suicide by hanging himself in his prison cell in Milan, Michigan.

Can the cycle and addiction be broken? The answer must be yes but it is in the hands of the individual. I always find the idea that praying for God to remove some sin that you are positively engaged in is hypocritical. Let me explain. If you are praying for God to deliver you from

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²⁷Theodore Robert Bundy was an American serial killer, kidnapper, rapist, and necrophile who assaulted and murdered numerous young women and girls during the 1970s and possibly earlier. Ted Bundy was born November 24, 1946, in Burlington, Vermont. In the 1970s, he raped and murdered young women in several US states. He was connected to at least 36 murders, but some thought he had committed one hundred or more. He was executed in Florida's electric chair in 1989.

pornography while sitting there watching it you are an insincere hypocrite. You want God to drag you away from something that you should walk away from or for which you are responsible. It reminded me of a road safety post the other week, "The United Church of Zambia (UCZ) has conducted countrywide prayers seeking God's intervention in the wake of escalating deaths resulting from road traffic accidents". There you go, its got nothing to do with the idiots who drive like maniacs, fail to maintain their vehicles, drink and drive, speed and so on has it?

For people engaged in any sin, I would ask do you really have the Lord sitting beside you while you engage in sin or are you so ashamed and embarrassed that you did not bring Him along with you? There is always a way out of sin, the question is, do you really want to take it? 1Co 10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. 1Co 10:14 Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. There is always an escape route but people sinning often prefer to stick with the sin. People sin because they enjoy sin and if they did not enjoy it they would "flee" ($\phi \epsilon \dot{\phi} \gamma \omega = \rho \dot{\phi} \omega \gamma \omega = \rho \dot{\phi} \omega \gamma \omega$) from it.

We need to decide where we want to be with regard to sin and like Moses, *Heb 11:25 Choosing* rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Take the escape route because the alternative is that God will not provide you a place in the Kingdom.

17. Democide and devils

Let us now direct our focus to the subject of the "Rulers of darkness". The reason that I have included this subject in our study on healing is because we saw that sickness and death on a massive scale, can be caused by satan. 1Ch 21:1 And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel......1Ch 21:14 So the LORD sent pestilence upon Israel: and there fell of Israel seventy thousand men. My thesis is that there is an unseen conflict that will affect the health of humanity, wars, famines and pestilences that have a demonic origin.

A 2013 YouGov poll found that 65% of Britons deny that the devil exists or that he can possess people, 18% believe that he does, and he can, while another 17% say they aren't sure about the existence of the devil or possession. 57% of Americans believe in the existence of the devil and fully half (51%) believe that a person can be possessed by the devil or 'some other evil spirit'. A 2007 Harris poll found that more Americans believed in the devil than believed in Darwin's theory of evolution. It is also clear that many of those who believe also use the occult.

The late Nancy Reagan, the former US President's wife, secretly consulted astrologer Joan Quigley regularly throughout the 1980s. It was a minor scandal when President Reagan's former chief of staff Donald T. Regan revealed what he called the administration's "most closely guarded secret." "Virtually every major move and decision the Reagans made during my time as White House chief of staff was cleared in advance with a woman in San Francisco who drew up horoscopes to make certain that the planets were in a favourable alignment for the enterprise," Donald Regan wrote in his 1988 memoir (For the Record: From Wall Street to Washington). Early in his political career, Ronald Reagan scheduled his inauguration as Governor of California in January 1967 to take place at

an odd time, 12:10 A.M. News reports at the time said the decision was made to take advantage of favourable astrological portents.

What Reagan did, has been done since the beginning of time. Reagan professed faith in Christ but not enough to guide his life. He wanted to get an edge, he wanted an advantage through knowledge of things yet to pass and the devil will supply all his needs. He wanted to bypass God and in that he is no different to King Ahaziah, 2Ki 1:2 And Ahaziah fell down through a lattice in his upper chamber that was in Samaria, and was sick: and he sent messengers, and said unto them, **Go, enquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron** whether I shall recover of this disease. 2Ki 1:3 But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say unto them, Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to enquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron? 2Ki 1:4 Now therefore thus saith the LORD, Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die. And Elijah departed.

Baal (ba'al) was an ancient Canaanite and Mesopotamian deity associated with agriculture. He was believed to be the "giver of life" and mankind was dependant upon him for providing what was necessary to sustain the farms, flocks and herds. He was also called the "son of Dagon" (who was in control of the grain), and "Hadad" the storm god who would provide plentiful rains after hearing his voice (thunder). The land of Canaan was devoted to the worship of Baal. The Semitic word Baal means "lord" or "master" and the Canaanites believed that Baal was in absolute control over nature and over people. They believed that the only god who was superior to Baal was his father El, but Baal was the principal deity of the land and man's survival was dependent upon Baal's provision.

"One may question whether those ancient enemies of Israel were as evil as the Bible claims that they were, but even a superficial glance at Canaanite religion demonstrates their iniquity. Base sex worship was prevalent, and religious prostitution even commanded; human sacrifice was common; and it was a frequent practice in an effort to placate their gods, to kill young children and bury them in the foundations of a house or public building at the time of construction: *Joshua 6:26 "In his days did Hiel the Bethelite build Jericho: he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his firstborn...*" (Howard E. Vos, "An Introduction To Bible Archaeology" Revised ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1953) pp. 17-19).

Why do men consort with devils? Someone described it like this, "occult healing seems to do good a lot cheaper". The person described the benefits of healing by spirits, "They don't eat, they don't pay taxes and they supply the labour". Economically it is the philosophy of something for nothing, at least something for nothing now but it is in reality hire purchase because you will pay later and that is the devil's way from the beginning. The lie is that God always has a trick up His sleeve and is not honest with us, whereas satan is a benefactor and gives information for free and power with minimal effort on our part, Gen 3:4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: Gen 3:5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

The first sign that things had gone wrong was that life got harder. Gen 3:17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Gen 3:18 **Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee**;

and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; That is satan for you. The demon created a mess and walked away from it leaving man to clean up his mess. Next time you are in the garden weeding, remember how you got that task.

Satan is desperate to appear as a benefactor. It all seems so reasonable, *Luk 4:5* And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. *Luk 4:6* And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. *Luk 4:7* If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine. A small price to pay you might think, for so much. Just bow down and its all yours, no strings attached or rather, no strings apparent. Someone said if the offer looks too good to be true, it probably is and that is how satan tricks people.

In a recent news article²⁸, "Behind all but a few Taiwanese politicians, there's a fortune teller", it stated, media reports involving the island's leaders assigning soothsayers, have been popping up in such short intervals that the existence of the phenomenon can hardly be doubted. Yet intriguingly, the Taiwanese public aren't overly worried about being governed with a generous portion of hocus-pocus (sic!). In the past three months alone, light was shed several times on the perturbing connection between political decision-making on the island and the supernatural. According to US diplomatic cables recently released by WikiLeaks, the then-opposition, now-ruling Kuomintang (KMT) fought out its internal power struggle in the run up to the 2008 presidential elections not only with skilful political manoeuvring and scholarly expertise but also with fortune tellers. Legislative Speaker Wang Jin-pyng allegedly consulted a seer who told Wang he would make a fine presidential candidate, a claim Wang denied.

In another Reuters article²⁹ in 2016, "Uncertain times fuel occult beliefs in China's Party hierarchy":

A story was told that "sometime in the last year, a group of mid-ranked government officials gathered for a dinner in a private room in a Beijing restaurant, all slightly nervous, but keen with anticipation. The guest of honor - a Buddhist master who would predict their fortunes. The master looked around the room and into the eyes of each of the dozen or so attendees, according to one of those present, who spoke on condition of anonymity as officials and Communist Party members are not supposed to believe in "superstition".

"He picked people out depending on the shape of their eyes and told them whether they had been touched by luck or misfortune," the source, a government official with ties to the leadership, told Reuters. A few months later, one of the people present whose eyes told of misfortune to come was under investigation for abuse of power, the source added. "At times like this with so much uncertainty, lots of us are looking for ways to foresee our fortunes," the source said. He declined to name the master, citing a fear he may be arrested.

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²⁸ http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/MI15Ad01.html

http://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-religion-idUSKCN0Q307Q20150729

Chinese people, especially the country's leaders, have a long tradition of putting their faith in soothsaying and geomancy, looking for answers in times of doubt, need and chaos. The practice has grown more risky amid a sweeping crackdown on deep-seated corruption launched by President Xi Jinping upon assuming power in late 2012, in which dozens of senior officials have been imprisoned.

June's announcement of the jailing of the powerful former security chief Zhou Yongkang on graft charges included the accusation he leaked undisclosed state secrets to a fortune teller and healer called Cao Yongzheng, known as the "Xinjiang sage" after the far western region where he grew up.

You can make your own enquiries and you will see that the occult is a feature of many Governments past and present. There is even debate about the Great Seal that features on the American dollar, that it is a Masonic symbol. That is an interesting speculation but it is not where I want to take this study.



The difference between a relationship with the Creator and a relationship with the devil, is that a relationship with the Creator is a relationship based upon trust, not based upon whether He will inflict good or bad upon us. It is **not** about knowing the future to avoid problems. It is a relationship forged upon the knowledge that He will work all things for the best but it is not for us to know everything. In fact there are times when God will be silent, and in the life of King Saul, the answers he wanted came from a witch. 1Sa 28:5 And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled. 1Sa 28:6 And when Saul enquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. 1Sa 28:7 Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor. Saul's insistence on finding a necromancer does not give him any comfort as the outcome had been decided. Saul gained no advantage.

I imagine that the way of the Lord, seemed in many respects, far harsher than the way of Baal and the demons. Human nature had merely to runs its course with Baal and indulge all of its senses, but with the Lord it was always a fight against the flesh. Sin is pleasurable. We like things that indulge our senses, sweet things, things with fat in them. It takes a tough spirit to resist sin, a character like Moses, Heb 11:25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. It is why the Christian is in the centre of a battlefield, Eph 6:12 We are not fighting against humans. We are fighting against forces and authorities and against rulers of darkness and powers in the spiritual world. CEV.

That statement opens up a whole new view of reality. Our battle is not with mankind, although we might think that, because we see so much evil and destruction that is caused by men. We are fighting, or rather we should be fighting the controllers of this conflict. 2Co 4:4 The god who rules this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers. They cannot see the light, which is the good news

about our glorious Christ, who shows what God is like. CEV. When satan offers Christ the world and its kingdoms, Our Lord does not say, "its not yours to give". As John says, 1Jn 5:19 And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. The word for world is cosmos and this whole creation is in the grip of evil and the evil one.

Because of this, I will venture to say that there is not one kingdom or government on this planet that is not driven by sin and the devil. You will say, that is rather a harsh and dogmatic judgement. It is. Tell me where there is one "Christian" country? They are all secular states with their corrupt officials, one by one removing the laws of God from the lives of their citizens. Yes, there may be Christians in Government but they have tiny voices and will often end up as a persecuted minority.

When the devil pits nation against nation, his only aim is destruction and chaos. Two secular societies, the US and UK, falsified evidence to attack another corrupt government, Iraq. We have been waiting over 6 years for the report from Chilcot to explain what happened and why we invaded a sovereign nation under a pretext that they had weapons of mass destruction. The consequence was that far from making the west safer, it has destabilised the whole region, created a new breed of terrorist which now have easy access to our nations. Millions of displaced people are suffering because of the lies told by our leaders. It is not for nothing that Imam Khomeini of Iran called America the great 'satan'. "They do not understand [the language of] reason, they do not follow international law, nor do they follow moral and humane laws. They have no religion and they do not accept God. They are a bunch of profane people, but seemingly, some are called Christians and some are called Jews". That is quite a perceptive statement, especially as it was made in the 1970's. Few recall that David Cameron led Britain into one war in Libya that overthrew Gaddafi, which was disastrous for most Libyans and Cameron nearly led us into another war with Syria. No wonder the term "great satan" has also been applied to the UK.

Where do all these wars come from, that is, how do they originate? Jas 4:1 From whence come wars (πόλεμος = polēmos) and fightings (μάχη = machē) among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts $(\dot{η}δον\dot{η} = h\bar{e}don\bar{e})$ that war in your members? Jas 4:2 Ye lust $(\dot{ε}πιθυμέω = epithume\bar{o})$, and have not: ye kill, and desire $(ζηλόω = z\bar{e}lo\bar{o})$ to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Jas 4:3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts $(\dot{η}δον\dot{η} = h\bar{e}don\bar{e})$. Jas 4:4 Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship $(\dot{φ}ιλία = philia)$ of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. Jas 4:5 Do ye think that the Scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? Jas 4:6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Jas 4:7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

There are in man the sins of hedonism, selfish passion and jealousy. I will suggest that in the context of the epistle, James is directing us to consider that human strife is based upon what I will call cosmophilia, a love of the world³⁰. It produces a conflict and it is inspired by satan. Thus James says "stand against the devil", not "fight sin" which he could have done, because it is obvious that it is sin but less obvious the perpetrator is the devil. Submit to God and resist the devil is a couplet.

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 $^{^{}m 30}$ The word is used by many to describe the "new age" paraphernalia.

Ranged against this evil are the armies of God. There is an incident in the life of the prophet Elisha that Syria came up against Israel. It reveals something that would never occur to us. 2Ki 6:15 And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? 2Ki 6:16 And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. 2Ki 6:17 And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. 2Ki 6:18 And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the LORD, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha.

There was an invisible army working behind the events of history. In another event an evil spirit determines the history of a nation, *Jdg 9:23 Then God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech: Jdg 9:24 That the cruelty done to the threescore and ten sons of Jerubbaal might come, and their blood be laid upon Abimelech their brother, which slew them; and upon the men of Shechem, which aided him in the killing of his brethren.* This event eventually leads to the death Of Abimelech.

In the days of Daniel, he is visited by a messenger who makes this comment, Dan 10:12 Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. Dan 10:13 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia. Dan 10:14 Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days.

Some Major Episodes and Cases of Democide

The message and messenger to Daniel were delayed for a period while some celestial conflict raged the details of which we are not given. Yet from the examples we have been given in Scripture, it is quite clear that when conflicts in this world occur, there is far more happening than meets the eye. What happens is not just the conflicts between human beings, there are, according to the Scripture, the elements of spiritual entities working to influence the outcomes.

When we look at the scale of human suffering inflicted by conflicts over the last century, it is hard to comprehend how such horrors could be just the work of man. They are demonic in magnitude and depravity. They are insane in their fury and

EPISODES/CASES	DEMOCIDE (000) [1]	YEARS	VICTIRS	PERPETRATOR REGIME(S)
Concentration/labor camps	39,464	1917-87	anyone	USSR
Jewish Holocaust	5,291	1942-45	European Jews	Hitler's
Intentional Ultraine Famine	5,000	1932-33	peasants	Stalin's
China Land Reform	4,500	1949-53	rich/landlords	Mao Tse-tung's
Collectivization	3,133	1928-35	peasants/landlords	Stalin's
Cambodian Hell	2,000	1975-79	Cambodian people	Pol Pot's
Cultural Revolution	1,613	1964-75	communists/officials/ intellectuals	Mao Tse-tung's
German expulsion	1,583	1945-48	German Ethnics	Poland
Bengali/Hindu genocide	1,500	1971	Hindus/Bengali leaders/intellectuals	Palistan
Armenian genocide	1,404	1915-18	Turkey's Armenians	Young Turks'
Great Terror	1,000	1936-38	communists	Stalin's
Serbian genocide	655	1941-45	Serbs/Jews/Gypsies	Croatian Ustashi
Indonesian massacre	509	1965-66	communists/ sympathizers	Army
Uganda massacres	300	1971-79	critics/opponents/ tribesmen	ldi Amin's
Boat People	250	1975-87	Vietnamese/Chinese	Vietnam
Spanish Civil War	200	1936-39	Republicans/ Nationalists	Republican Go√t/ Nationalist Army
Rape of Nanking	200	1937-38	Chinese	Japanese Army
"La Violencia" massacres	180	1948-58	liberals/conservatives	Colombia Liberal/ Conservative Gov'ts
Tribal massacre	150	1971-72	Hutu educated/leaders	Burundi Hutu
East Timor massacres	150	1975-87	Timorese	Indonesian Army
Colonial massacres	132	1900-18	Hereros/Hottentots/ others	German Kaiser's

debasement of humanity. Six million Jews were exterminated in what became known by the name of the Jewish burnt offering, the holocaust. This is just a fraction of the murders³¹ that were perpetrated under such banners as national socialism and communism and by our own country's socialist government.

Can you pass by these figures and say that this is the result of sane human behaviour or is it the result of madness and demonic madness at that? What made the man who lived in the tombs at Gadara so dangerous? It was that he was demonised and it was frightening to the population. The man was antisocial having suffered a severe personality change and was self-destructive which sums up many of those who committed Democide. What is perhaps even more frightening is that the Gadarene was not just in the control of one demon but a legion of demons. That perhaps goes someway to explain the scale of human destruction inflicted on humanity.

In conclusion, the point that we have made is that the cosmic battle with satan will inflict huge levels of sickness and death upon humanity.

18. Dealing with the devil

I want to look at how we confront the devil. You will no doubt have seen at some time movie films where people deal with the devil and his cohorts. In "The devil rides out" by Dennis Wheatley, the heroes seek shelter from the forces of evil in a 'magic' chalk circle. In "Dracula" by Bram Stoker, the vampire can be killed by the rays of the sun or a wooden stake through the heart. Waving a crucifix at the undead causes them to cower and if touched by it, it will burn them. In the film "The exorcist", the demon possessed girl writhes in pain when "holy" water is sprinkled on her. Did you ever stop and wonder why any of this mumbo jumbo should work? Why crucifixes, holy water, special signs, symbols and incantations should make the slightest difference to demons? They do not have any effect on me, so why should they work on devils?

It does not surprise me that many people are confused when it comes to religions that seem more like secret societies and have rituals clouded in mystery. *Col 2:18 Don't be cheated by people who make a show of acting humble and who worship angels. They brag about seeing visions. But it is all nonsense, because their minds are filled with selfish desires. Col 2:19 They are no longer part of Christ, who is the head of the whole body. Christ gives the body its strength, and he uses its joints and muscles to hold it together, as it grows by the power of God. CEV.*

Here is how the Catholic Church does its magic in the Catholic Rite of Exorcism:

The priest delegated to perform this office should first go to confession or at least elicit an act of contrition, and, if convenient, offer the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and implore God's help in other fervent prayers. He vests in surplice and purple stole. Having before him the person possessed (who should be bound if there is any danger), he traces the sign of the cross over him, over himself, and the bystanders, and then sprinkles all of them with holy water. After this he kneels and says the Litany of the Saints, exclusive of the prayers which follow it. All present are to make the responses.

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³¹ https://www.hawaii.edu/powerkills/welcome.html

The Litany of the Saints is used (also in ordination, Forty Hours', processions, and other occasions). Both the Roman Ritual and the Roman Pontifical direct that the first three invocations be repeated. The music for this litany is given in the music supplement. The invocations are sung (or recited) by the chanters or the priest; the responses by all.

The ritual then invokes Mary and a host of dead saints to intercede for them (the ritual seems more like a séance at this stage). As the ritual advances to the conclusion:

Then he commands the demon as follows: I command you, unclean spirit, whoever you are, along with all your minions now attacking this servant of God, by the mysteries of the incarnation, passion, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, by the descent of the Holy Spirit, by the coming of our Lord for judgment, that you tell me by some sign your name, and the day and hour of your departure. I command you, moreover, to obey me to the letter, I who am a minister of God despite my unworthiness; nor shall you be emboldened to harm in any way this creature of God, or the bystanders, or any of their possessions.

The priest lays his hand on the head of the sick person, saying: They shall lay their hands upon the sick and all will be well with them. May Jesus, Son of Mary, Lord and Saviour of the world, through the merits and intercession of His holy apostles Peter and Paul and all His saints, show you favour and mercy.

Just how that magic ritual evolved is unclear but it is clear that it has nothing to do with the Word of God. The Church of England's approach also tries to cover every base, being a pick and mix treatment to suit your preferences. The CoE 'Deliverance Ministry' was set up in 1974 after an "unfortunate" exorcism³² in Yorkshire. It has teams of clergy and psychiatrists in each diocese and investigates dozens of claims of haunting, poltergeists and demonic possession very year. No exorcism is sanctioned without the consent of the local bishop and a psychiatric assessment. The Rev Lisle Ryder, head of the Deliverance Ministry in Worcester and a member of the Christian Deliverance Study Group, which trains parish clergy, regards deliverance as alternative form of therapy for people with strong religious beliefs.

"Many people in distress come to the church for help because they have a religious frame of reference and are either put off from visiting a doctor because of the stigma of mental illness or because they don't believe their problems have a scientific explanation," said Mr Ryder. "Exorcism should only be used as a last resort," he warns. "I've only carried out five in the past eight years, but they have not followed the traditional rite. A simple blessing will usually suffice to comfort most people. Many clearly have a mental health problem.

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³² In 1975 Michael Taylor was found not guilty of the killing of Christine Taylor. It was claimed he had undergone an all-night exorcism in Barnsley in October 1974 where 40 demons were cast out of him. Leeds Crown Court heard how the former butcher travelled home to Havercroft, Ossett, but he became convinced his 29-year-old wife was also possessed by an evil spirit. Prosecutor Geoffrey Baker QC said: "At about 10 o'clock that day this man attacked his wife with his bare hands, tore her eyes out, her tongue out and tore her face almost off. She died very quickly." Taylor was cleared of his wife's bizarre murder by reason of insanity.

The word Exorcist is derived from the Greek word meaning to adjure. Mat 26:63 But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure ($\dot{\epsilon}\xi$ op κ i $\zeta\omega$ = exorkiz \bar{o}) thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. An exorcist historically is one who expels demons by the use of magical formulas. In the strict etymological sense there is no exorcism in the Bible. The term "exorcists" is used once, Act 19:13 Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. Rather than establish exorcism as a means of removing devils it exposes and discredit these professional exorcists. I put these vagabond Jewish exorcists in the same camp as the Catholics and Anglicans that I mentioned earlier.

The demons must be rolling around in laughter when they look at the antics men dream up to deal with them. It reminds me of how Samson played with Delilah as she tried to get the secret of his strength and each time she thought she had the answer he mocked her. Jdg 16:6 So Delilah said to Samson, "Please tell me what makes you so strong. How can you be tied up so that someone could torture you?" Jdg 16:7 Samson told her, "If someone ties me up with seven new bowstrings that are not dried out, I will be like any other man." Jdg 16:8 The Philistine rulers brought her seven new bowstrings that were not dried out. She tied Samson up with them. Jdg 16:9 Some men were hiding in the bedroom waiting for her to tie him up. Then she said to him, "Samson, the Philistines are attacking!" Samson snapped the bowstrings as a thread snaps when it touches fire. So no one found out why he was so strong. GW. The demons will play along as they did with the Jewish exorcists and then they will show their true nature when confronted with Christ. The damage that can be done through ignorance is plain to see in the example of Michael Taylor who murdered his wife.

Do not think for a moment that I am saying that we cannot deal with demonization. What I am saying is that it is not something owned by so called clergy or church leaders, it does not involve magic water or crucifix's, sacred symbols, it does not involve a liturgy, prayers of dead saints, it involves a saving relationship with Jesus. Mar 16:17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; Mar 16:18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. Those verses state quite clearly that believers will have signs attending their faith which will cover new tongues and throwing out devils. There is no restriction (as MacArthur would have it) such that it is only an apostolic function.

At this point those who do not accept the continuance of the New Testament phenomenon will switch off, which is unfortunate because they will continue to use the teaching of the New Testament on a selective basis. They will reject the practical actualities of the NT in favour of the abstract doctrines that will consequentially have limited application. For me, the way the NT unfolds in the lives of the Christians is inextricably linked to its doctrine and it is a doctrine that these people will throw out devils.

I will make three divisions between the issues that we are confronting and then suggest how we should act with respect to each issue.

1. Demonization as it impacts upon the world in general. *Eph 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places*.

- 2. Demonization as it impacts other people both in the church and outside of the church. Act 8:6 And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. Act 8:7 For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: Philip was not an Apostle.
- 3. Demonization as it impacts our own lives. *Jas 4:7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

The Principalities and powers. As we have studied, there is an unseen world interacting with our world. In our world, the Christian is salt and light, Mat 5:13 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Mat 5:14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Mat 5:15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Mat 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

That "salt and light" itself will bring us into conflict with the powers of darkness. If you are not prepared to engage in that conflict, you have to ask yourself whose camp are you in. We must challenge falsehood and we should not sit quietly by while the devil's children spout lies, even if it should cost us our own lives. 2Co 10:3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: 2Co 10:4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) 2Co 10:5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

You can only do that if you educate yourself, but I see a generation that wastes it time following knowledge that is of little value, while the great challenge to Creation, the inspiration of Scripture and the obedience of faith are lost. This is an obdurate and uneducated generation that has reduced its duties to hymn singing and community service and it loves it to be so. It does just enough to dull its conscience while it serves its own belly. It is not in the fight because it avoids the fight and the devil loves it that way. This evil generation fights neither sin in the churches nor sin outside the churches.

Another reason that we are incapable of battle is because we lack the weapons. We all know that we should put on the "panoply" of God, the weapons of God, but you ask a Christian where he gets them from and he probably will have no idea. You may ask, how can I get involved in a cosmic conflict, how can an individual make any impact on what is happening? Well you can because you are encouraged to fight. We spoke after our meeting last week about people who seem to be given the faith to achieve great works for God and so many of us seem to achieve so little. Yet here is something that every single Christian can be involved with and it is a question as to whether you are prepared to be actively engaged, to be on active service or not. You can become an intercessor.

As William Cowper observed, "Satan trembles when he sees the weakest Christian on his knees." I know few husbands and wives or families that pray together daily and encourage each other in the faith. I know none who actively seek conflict with the principalities and powers. Religion is left to the "professionals", so called pastors, hired servants, to act on our behalf but that is wrong and we must

make it a matter of personal prayer that the heavens will hear our voices crying out against the evils of our day. Rev 6:9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held: Rev 6:10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? If the saints in heaven pray for justice do you not think that we should?

We must pray for the Kingdom to come and we will, unless we love the 'now' too much. This desire is not out of hatred or personal revenge against the unbeliever, it is not a score that we settle, for they will meet their maker and He will settle it. What we are asking is that the wicked be removed from inflicting evil and we will, unless we are not bothered with their actions because they are too far removed from our comfort zones. Those prayers extend for our rulers and are out of enlightened self interest. 1Ti 2:1 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; 1Ti 2:2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. 1Ti 2:3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.

I do not pray for politicians David Cameron or Jeremy Corbin in the UK, that they will have a lovely day, get rich (they will anyway), be disease free, reduce taxes and champion climate change. I pray that they will be convicted of their godlessness and that they will adopt a morality worthy of their Creator and if not that it may please God to remove them³³ and replace them with people who will be godly. I do not pray for our Queen that she may have a long life, a happy family and lots of grandchildren. I pray that she will do what she promised at her coronation in 1953. "Will you to the utmost of your power maintain the Laws of God and the true profession of the Gospel? etc," to which HM replied, "All this I promise to do". Well, in the light of this broken oath, what will you pray for the Queen?

We need godly rulers, godly politicians, godly leaders, men raised up by God, not the thieving, lying, self congratulatory sons of the devil that ruin nations and bring men to the grave in sorrow. Yet this is what we have today and it might suggest that we have it because we are not fighting against it and we do not hold it as a matter of prayer. When Paul wrote to Timothy it was to encourage him in his Christian duty. 1Ti 2:1 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; I do not think that this is an option. If we want a peaceable life this is how we should go about it.

Do we include in those prayers that satan will be bound from influencing men to do evil. That God's will may be done here on earth or is it a matter of indifference. The devil take the hindermost as the saying goes. I believe that we are asked to pray because prayer works. It is not a fruitless task but it is an essential task if we are going to make an impact on the battle. I want to take us back to the time of Daniel to make this point. I remember singing that old hymn:

"Dare to be a Daniel".

"Many mighty men are lost,
Daring not to stand,

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³³ Cameron resigned in June 2016 after a failed attempt to shackle the UK to the corrupt European Union.

Who for God had been a host By joining Daniel's band". (P. P. Bliss).

Dan 10:1 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing was true, but the time appointed was long: and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision. Dan 10:2 In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks. I can only speculate as to what had caused Daniel to mourn and I will associate it with what has previously been said about the '70 weeks' (see Jesus and Prophecy). The sequence of the chapters of the book of Daniel are separated by many years in time, so that Daniel may have wrestled years to understand what was happening. Daniel has just received an understanding of a vision, a personal revelation and rather than cause him to rejoice it throws him into deep sadness, a mourning that lasted for 3 weeks so great was its effect. Why? Daniel's mourning was as the loss of a child for this is the word as used elsewhere. Gen 37:34 And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days. We might have expected that Prophecy would have brought great joy and comfort however, but not if it contained sad news. I will suggest that Daniel finally understands the significance of the events yet to come and realises that the Messiah, the Deliverer will die. It throws him into mourning but comfort and understanding are on their way.

After the 3 weeks, Daniel is then given a vision of the pre-incarnate Messiah, the son of God when his mourning is over, Dan 10:5 Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz: Dan 10:6 His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude. There follows an explanation about what has happened by another messenger. Dan 10:12 Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. Dan 10:13 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia. Dan 10:14 Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days. Dan 10:15 And when he had spoken such words unto me, I set my face toward the ground, and I became dumb.

Something happened outside of the realm of Daniel's consciousness, when he began his mourning and prayers. A battle began to rage in the heavens and the messenger of comfort was delayed by "the prince of Persia" a demon, not Cyrus the king of Persia. The question that we ask, is are these events connected or are they coincidences? If they are coincidences, why bother to mention the time (3 weeks) because it is irrelevant to the outcome of history. I suggest that they are linked and the connection is spiritual. I would like to suggest that Daniel was instrumental in starting that heavenly conflict and that is also to be an encouragement to us in our battles against principalities. Daniel launched a war through intercession and self affliction.

Angels we are told like to look into prophecy, 1Pe 1:11 Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. 1Pe 1:12 Unto whom it was revealed, that **not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things**, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached

the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look (παρακύπτω = parakuptō) into. The Greek word to 'look into' gives the sense of bending over to peer into. They are trying to peek into what God is doing and I have no doubt this is true for both the good and evil angels.

I will suggest that what was revealed to Daniel as a believer was picked up on by the 'principalities and powers'. Straightway the forces of darkness move to change the outcome of history and however it is conducted, there is a war between the powers of darkness ruling both Persia and Greece and God's host. It is a battle that continued after the visit to Daniel. Dan 10:20 Then said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come. Dan 10:21 But I will shew thee that which is noted in the Scripture of truth: and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince. It is a battle that will rage into the future.

Daniel was somehow engaged in that battle and the messenger (perhaps Gabriel) came for his words to give him understanding of the last times, the last pieces of the puzzle. The forces of darkness did not want that to happen and I suggest that they do not want you to know what will happen either. They want to prolong their evil rule and that is what we fight against. They want us to live in the shadow of defeat not in the light of victory. If we pray for our daily bread and make no effort to work for it and lie in bed, we have the same attitude as those who want the kingdom to come without being involved in that struggle.

We cannot sit back and pray for the "kingdom to come" without becoming involved in the fight to bring it about. I will give you a test of our commitment to bringing in the kingdom. Are we prepared to bring the house down like Samson? Even if it costs us our lives and everything we hold dear? No? Then that is no commitment, that is continued support for the present evil world and we are not in the fight. 2Co 10:4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) 2Co 10:5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

19. Lion hunters

We are now going to consider how we deal with demons, as they work in the lives of unbelievers. This is about how we confront the devil in the lives of those who are **outside of Christ**. You may not have noticed but there is nowhere that the Christian is told that he should fear the devil. *1Pe 5:8 Be on your guard and stay awake. Your enemy, the devil, is like a roaring lion, sneaking around to find someone to attack. 1Pe 5:9 But you must resist the devil and stay strong in your faith. You know that all over the world the Lord's followers are suffering just as you are. CEV. If heaven forbid that you should meet a real lion, the advice given³⁴ is to stand your ground and make yourself appear as big as possible, hold your ground, never run or turn your back. The Bible tells us that we should fear God but never that we should be afraid of satan.*

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³⁴ http://www.discoverwildlife.com/travel/how-survive-lion-attack

If we fear the devil we are denying the power of Christ. 1Jn 4:3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. 1Jn 4:4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is HE that is in you, than he that is in the world. Ask that of yourself? Do you believe it? Samson may have been a "rough Christian" but when the Spirit of God was with him, he could kill a lion with his bare hands. In respect to satan, we should become lion killers.

So how did the Christians deal with demons in unbelievers? One thing that you will not see in the NT, is the disciples setting up special healing sessions or campaigns of healing. Indeed, there also seems to be a certain reluctance to seek out the demonized masses and they appear to tackle them only as an inconvenience on the road of evangelism.

The infamous Salem witch trials began during the spring of 1692, after a group of young girls in Salem Village, Massachusetts, claimed to be possessed by the devil and accused several local women of witchcraft. In January 1692, 9 year old Elizabeth (Betty) Parris and 11 year old Abigail Williams (the daughter and niece of Samuel Parris, minister of Salem Village) began having fits, including violent contortions and uncontrollable outbursts of screaming. After a local doctor, William Griggs, diagnosed bewitchment, other young girls in the community began to exhibit similar symptoms

As a wave of hysteria spread throughout colonial Massachusetts, a special court convened in Salem to hear the cases; the first convicted witch, Bridget Bishop, was hanged that June. Eighteen others followed Bishop to Salem's Gallows Hill, while some 150 more men, women and children were accused over the next several months. By September 1692, the hysteria had begun to abate and public opinion turned against the trials. Though the Massachusetts General Court later annulled guilty verdicts against accused witches and granted indemnities to their families, bitterness lingered in the community. Modern studies have suggested that the fungus ergot (found in rye, wheat and other cereals), which toxicologists say can cause symptoms such as delusions, vomiting and muscle spasms were the cause of the problem.

I cite the Salem witch trials to make a contrast with the way demons are handled in the NT. With one exception that we shall examine, they are cast out instantly and the person afflicted is restored to sanity. There are no long, drawn out trials and examinations, leading to judicial executions in the NT, in fact, as we have shown before, the Church does not carry out death sentences on its own members or the world's children. If a Christian is going to deal with demonization, it is conducted very quickly.

I would also suggest that there would be a communication with the Lord as to whether it was His will to remove a demon. We should remind ourselves that the ministry focus was the propagation of the saving Gospel of Christ. They did not go out of their way to seek demonized souls but where they came across the problem, they dealt with it. We do not find NT churches offering a service of exorcisms to unbelievers. Neither do they provide services for unbelievers, services for births, deaths and marriages, hatching, matching and despatching. Some will say that by not doing so, you are missing an opportunity for a Christian witness. My answer is that the church did not need excuses to witness, it witnessed all the time and it did not give false hope to the unsaved.

The church is not a technician for the godless. The gifts of the spirit are primarily intended for the building up of Christians, the body of Christ. Those who minister the gospel to the unbeliever may use gifts to establish the authority that God has given them but they do not advertise a service, like the vagabond Jews. Act 19:13 Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. Act 19:14 And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. Act 19:15 And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? Act 19:16 And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. They failed. All were attacked and beaten by the demon-controlled man who ripped their clothes off.

There is an occasion in Thyatira when Paul is quite reticent to cast out a demon (python) who gives a woman the power of divination. *Act 16:18 And this did she many days*. *But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour*. This act ended their evangelism and caused Paul and Silas to be beaten and cast in prison. Perhaps this is why they did not rise to the provocation immediately? However, note this. The devil is removed by a simple command. This is the mark of authority and there is no discussion, no ritual, no religious magic. It is a simple command to "get out!"

We should not get carried away with the idea that the grander the ceremony, the greater the power. This was Naaman the leper's expectation, 2Ki 5:11 But Naaman stormed off, grumbling, "Why couldn't he come out and talk to me? I thought for sure he would stand in front of me and pray to the LORD his God, then wave his hand over my skin and cure me. That said, there are some strange or rather 'uncommon' works of power, Act 19:11 And God did uncommon works of power through the hands of Paul, Act 19:12 so as even handkerchiefs or aprons from his skin to be brought onto those sick, and the diseases to be released from them, and the evil spirits to go out from them. LITV. Evil spirits were removed by cloths that came from Paul's body.

Before we rush for the 'holy water', 'crucifix's', 'sacred relics' and 'magic rituals', I draw your attention to the point that these were 'uncommon' miracles. They were Pauline and Petrine, they do not appear to have been accomplished by anyone else and we do not see that they formed a precedent for other Christians, such that others copied the method. That said, I am not saying that it could not happen today but I do say that Paul did it in the knowledge that God had empowered him for that purpose. It was a gift of God to Paul perhaps with a purpose of creating a wider unity among Gentiles. We see a similar thing with Peter and Cornelius being drawn together and witnessing the shared gift of the spirit.

I reiterate that those who cast out demons did so with a command not ritual and the demons complied in all recorded cases except one and I think that this seeming exception requires our attention because it will tell us a lot about healing. Mar 9:28 And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out? Mar 9:29 And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting. There are three accounts of this event.

Matthew Mark Luke Luk 9:37 And it came to pass, Mat 17:14 And when Mar 9:17 And one of the multitude they were come to the answered and said, Master, I have brought that on the next day, when multitude, there came to unto thee my son, which hath a dumb they were come down from the hill, much people met him a certain man, spirit; kneeling down to him, Mar 9:18 And wheresoever he taketh him, him. and saying, he teareth him: and he foameth, and Luk 9:38 And, behold, a man Mat 17:15 Lord, have gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: of the company cried out, mercy on my son: for he and I spake to thy disciples that they saying, Master, I beseech is lunatick, and sore should cast him out; and they could not. thee, look upon my son: for vexed: for ofttimes he Mar 9:19 He answereth him, and saith, O he is mine only child. falleth into the fire, and faithless generation, how long shall I be Luk 9:39 And, lo, a spirit oft into the water. with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring taketh him, and he suddenly Mat 17:16 And I brought him unto me. crieth out; and it teareth him him to thy disciples, and Mar 9:20 And they brought him unto him: that he foameth again, and they could not cure him. and when he saw him, straightway the him hardly bruising Mat 17:17 Then Jesus spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, departeth from him. answered and said, O and wallowed foaming. Luk 9:40 And I besought thy faithless and perverse Mar 9:21 And he asked his father, How disciples to cast him out; and generation, how long long is it ago since this came unto him? they could not. shall I be with you? how And he said, Of a child. Luk 9:41 And Jesus long shall I suffer you? Mar 9:22 And ofttimes it hath cast him into answering said, O faithless bring him hither to me. the fire, and into the waters, to destroy and perverse generation, Mat 17:18 And Jesus him: but if thou canst do any thing, have how long shall I be with you, rebuked the devil; and he compassion on us, and help us. and suffer you? Bring thy son departed out of him: and Mar 9:23 Jesus said unto him, If thou canst hither. the child was cured from believe, all things are possible to him that Luk 9:42 And as he was yet a that very hour. believeth. coming, the devil threw him Mat 17:19 Then came the Mar 9:24 And straightway the father of the down, and tare him. And disciples to Jesus apart, child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I Jesus rebuked the unclean and said, Why could not believe; help thou mine unbelief. spirit, and healed the child, we cast him out? Mar 9:25 When Jesus saw that the people and delivered him again to Mat 17:20 And Jesus said came running together, he rebuked the his father. unto them, Because of foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb Luk 9:43 And they were all your unbelief: for verily I and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of amazed at the mighty power say unto you, If ye have him, and enter no more into him. of God. faith as a grain of Mar 9:26 And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, one dead; insomuch that many said, He is Remove hence to vonder it Mar 9:27 But Jesus took him by the hand, place; and shall and lifted him up; and he arose. remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto Mar 9:28 And when he was come into the

house, his disciples asked him privately,

Mar 9:29 And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer

Why could not we cast him out?

Mat 17:21 Howbeit this

kind goeth not out but by

prayer and fasting.

you.

and fasting.

We must set these accounts in their Biblical context. That context is the return from the mount of

Transfiguration. The Renaissance painter Raffaello Sanzio da Urbino (Raphael) captures perfectly what is happening. In his masterpiece, commissioned by the Medici's, "the Transfiguration" (1520), he portrays Christ on the Mountain with the three "Sons of Thunder" flanked by Moses and Elijah. In the lower portion of the painting are the other disciples and the demonic child. The disciples cannot remove the demon and the child is shown, looking wild eyed, at the Lord. The disciples appear to be debating why they cannot cast the devil out.

This contrast is, I believe, a key to understanding the issue. We have on the one hand, the manifestation of Divine glory and on the other hand, the manifestation of the complete impotence of humanity. The disciples could not cast out the demon for two reasons:



- 1. Unbelief
- 2. The need for prayer and fasting.

You may be as puzzled as I was by this, as to how 'prayer and fasting' could affect a demon. Why should afflicting my life have any other effect upon demons than to make them happy at my discomfort? Also if it is an issue of 'faith', what has that got to do with 'prayer and fasting'? Is it both 'faith' and 'prayer and fasting'?

It most certainly is an issue of faith but faith in what? If we had the tiniest amount of faith, we could move mountains, so moving devils is the lesser task. Yet faith is not without its object. Faith is not an organ like the heart, such that is we had bigger hearts we could do more work. Faith is an attitude. We have faith in an object and that is how it works. The ability to believe, trust, accept the truth of that object that is presented to us. Faith in the Scripture, faith in the person of Christ. That lack of faith was a lack of faith in Christ. No wonder our Lord appears so annoyed with them, the faithless generation, how long will He put up with them? After all that they had seen yet they still could not believe and that is my point. They did not have Christ as the object of their faith, no not so much a grain of mustard faith.

The great truth about Jesus, which the Apostle Paul puts so clearly in the letter to the Ephesians is that He is the Glorified Lord over all things, all power is His, all dominion is His. *Eph 1:17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: Eph 1:18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, Eph 1:19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Eph 1:20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Eph 1:21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this*

world, but also in that which is to come: Eph 1:22 And hath **put all things under his feet**, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church.

I think the disciples are working towards this point of understanding and they will arrive at it but what was required was understanding and that was where the 'prayer and fasting' came in. It is not dissimilar to Daniel, Dan 10:2 In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks. Dan 10:3 I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled. Eventually, Daniel like the disciples was given more knowledge which is why I suggest that they were to afflict their souls before God that He might give them that faith in Jesus. If as Paul says, Eph 2:6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: Then if we are with Christ we too are "Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come" because we are in Christ Jesus we too have that power and authority.

Remember that when this event of the Transfiguration and healing of the demonized boy occurred it was still in the OT times. With the greater revelation of Christ in the NT, I am not certain that we still have that same problem in removing demons? Though I say this, the important thing is that we have faith in Christ alone, faith in His power alone, faith in His working in our lives and faith to have Him operate through us and not faith in ourselves or our own ability.

So it is then, that we see the throwing out of demons in the NT done in the Name of Jesus. We are acting as His emissaries, His ambassadors, His representatives, 2Co 5:20 Therefore, we are Christ's representatives, and through us God is calling you. We beg you on behalf of Christ to become reunited with God. GW.

We command in the name of Jesus, with the authority that Jesus has given us to do this very thing. Mar 16:17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; And we see the disciples do this very thing, Act 16:18 And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour. Mar 16:17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; Joh 14:13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

It is a precious Name above all names and a Name that can only be invoked by believers as we saw with the exorcists. Act 19:13 Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. Act 19:14 And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. Act 19:15 And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? The exorcists suffered as those who knew not Jesus.

The weakness of the churches lies in the weakness of their relationship with Christ. They do not exhibit that authority which Christ has given them because they lack faith and consequently compromise the truth of God's word. Just read Christ's opinion of the 7 churches of Revelation. Surely we should be stronger than that? Surely we should be conquering in the Name of Jesus? *Php*

2:9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: Php 2:10 That **at the name of Jesus** every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; Php 2:11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

When the NT church was in conflict with their evil authorities, who would shut down their activities, they did not comply but straightway and they appealed to heaven for power. *Act 4:29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, Act 4:30 By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. Act 4:31 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the Word of God with boldness.*

Would it not be easier for our Christian lives if there were no devils and no demonization? We know that Jesus has the power to cast them all out and destroy them utterly, and He will but why not now? He did not even charge His disciples to free mankind from demons and make it a key target for their ministry. Dealing with demonization is a very minor issue in the progress of the Gospel. Why? It is not that it is unimportant but we have to understand the purpose of demons.

If we look back in the OT to the battles that Israel was engaged in, we notice that it was not God's purpose to drive out all of the surrounding nations, Jdg 3:3 Namely, five lords of the Philistines, and all the Canaanites, and the Sidonians, and the Hivites that dwelt in mount Lebanon, from mount Baalhermon unto the entering in of Hamath. These Nations were to be thorns in the side of Israel. Jdg 3:1 Now these are the nations which the LORD left, to prove Israel by them, even as many of Israel as had not known all the wars of Canaan; Jdg 3:2 Only that the generations of the children of Israel might know, to teach them war, at the least such as before knew nothing thereof.

If they did not have that provocation, they would not have learned how to 'war' and complacency and indolence would have overtaken them. It was in the conflict with these remnant Nations that Israel would learn to draw close to God and get strength from Him. *Psa 91:1 He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Psa 91:2 I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.*

I will venture to suggest that this is the same reason that God has left in place the principalities and powers of darkness. To make us better stronger soldiers and more reliant upon His mighty power.

20. In Christ alone

We are going to consider how we deal with demons as they work in and around the lives of believers, that is, how they can affect our lives. We have called their operation, demonization and while there may appear to be similarities as to how they operate in the lives of unbelievers, we shall see that they can be overcome in the lives of believers. A little girl was once asked how she defeats Satan. She said, "When Satan comes knocking at the door of my heart, I send God to answer the door. When Satan sees God, he says, "Ooops, I am sorry, I must have the wrong house." It's a nice

story with an element of truth, in so much as if you are "in the shadow of the Almighty", you will find protection. *Psa 91:1 Live under the protection of God Most High and stay in the shadow of God All-Powerful. CEV. Psa 91:1 He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide in the shade of the Almighty.* LITV.

I know many Christians who do not believe that satan can control aspects of their lives but it is clear from the way that they behave that they are influenced by satan and try to shrug off the evil that they do as "indwelling sin", the remnant of their old nature, the old man. They are somehow denying that the devil could have any control or influence over them whatsoever. They would rather think that their condition is down to a weak relationship with Christ (to a degree it is) rather than a strong influence of the devil. I have seen the influences of satan in the lives of those who would say they are Christians, yet they harbour hatred, malice, evil thoughts, unclean desires and all manner of evil and will not face up to the devil that brings these evils bubbling up daily.

The first point that we should note in our battle with satan is that we must be armed and protected. Eph 6:11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles ($\mu\epsilon\theta$ 0 $\delta\epsilon$ (α) = methodeia) of the devil. Eph 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Eph 6:13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

The elements of our armour are all aspects of the person and work of Christ in our lives:

- **Truth.** Eph 6:14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth,
- Righteousness. and having on the breastplate of righteousness;
- **The Gospel.** Eph 6:15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;
- **Faith.** Eph 6:16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.
- Salvation. Eph 6:17 And take the helmet of salvation, and
- **The Word.** the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God:

The "whole armour" or "panoply" is an allusion to the Greek Hoplite soldier³⁵. Panoply comes from the Greek word panoplia, which referred to the full suit of

armor worn by "hoplites," heavily armed infantry soldiers of ancient Greece. "Panoplia" is a blend of the prefix pan-, meaning "all," and hopla, meaning "arms" or "armor." The Hoplite was required to provide his own armour which was expensive. When your life was at stake, you would be a fool to buy poor quality weapons. Yet there are so many Christians who make little investment in this area of their lives. They give very little time to making sure that they are protected and they would never make a professional soldier because they do not see the importance of the battle. They will buy worldly insurance policies but do little to insure against evil.

³⁵ By Tilemahos Efthimiadis - Flickr: Athenian, CC BY-SA 2.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=16694702

Years ago, when I was a new Christian, I was mocked by another 'Christian' who said I was mad and would be madder through study. I said that if he spent as much money on books as his TV licence he could have a good library in 10 years. He did not and over the years, his general lack of application to the faith led to the breakdown of his family. He was just a Sunday believer.

The greatest conflicts that a Christian will suffer are in his own family, because that is where he is most prepared to compromise his beliefs and surrender his loyalty to the devil. Every child not brought to Christ is a gift for the devil. *Mat 10:36 Your worst enemies will be in your own family*. CEV. It happens because Christ is made a poor second to loving your own family and their needs will be put before Christ. We should be on watch for satan moving among our families and I have certainly seen his hand in mine.

Is that saying that used to be displayed in so many homes true of yours? "Christ is the Head of this house, the unseen Guest at every meal, the silent Listener at every conversation".

I am not saying that you have to build libraries but I am saying that you have to study for yourself. You have to develop that essential personal relationship with Jesus and not be dependent on institutions, organisations and other people. These things might help us to start on the road of life but they should never be controllers of that life. Our whole life must be about Christ alone. The elements, Truth, Righteousness, The Gospel, Faith, Salvation and the Word are all within our grasp and they will become more effective as we make time to grow in Christ. How much time are we prepared to commit to developing our weapons each day? Ask yourself?

I can best illustrate the folly of failed development by its consequences. *Eph 6:13 So put on all the armour that God gives. Then when that evil day comes, you will be able to defend yourself. And when the battle is over, you will still be standing firm*. CEV. If you have God's armour you will be standing at the end of the evil days. If you do not you will fall in the fight. You will succumb to the "evil days" and great will be your misery. You will be a victim of the devil and a victim of your own laziness. You will be the one without comfort, the one whose faith is shaken, the one who cannot find a word of hope, the one confused by events. The devil will make you progressively lazy, complacent and when you least expect it, he will strike.

If you are going to resist the devil you must be prepared to obey. Jas 4:7 So place yourselves under God's authority. Resist the devil, and he will run away from you. GW. The word "place yourself under God's authority ($\dot{\upsilon}\pi o \tau \dot{\alpha} \sigma \sigma \omega = \text{hupotass}\bar{o}$) is a military term. It means to "to arrange [troop divisions] in a military fashion under the command of a leader". It implies discipline.

Our health is in many ways dependent on that relationship with Christ. In the OT there was a clear link between sickness and obedience to the Lord. Sin and the devil will impact upon our health as we have seen. That may come about from personal sin, 1Co 11:30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 1Co 11:31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. Is it not strange that it is at this point, the communion with Christ that the sickness and death strike? Does it represent our general communion with Christ, that we are sick because we are sick of Christ? If we only commune with Christ on Sunday, what sort of relationship is that?

Clearly this can be avoided by an introspective attitude, a reflective attitude, upon sin in our lives. If we were less self-righteous and more critical about our lives and life choices, we might suffer less as a result. Do we suffer because of our lukewarm attitude? I read this interesting statement recently:

What is a lukewarm church? According to Jesus, it's one where members have a high opinion of their spiritual status because they are rich, prosperous, self-satisfied, and self-sufficient. They confuse the large size of their campus, their budget, and their membership roll with genuine spiritual growth and maturity — which, in Jesus' estimation — actually makes them "wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked" despite their apparent worldly success.

Many church analysts believe that the root of this "neither hot nor cold" state is an appalling theological and spiritual shallowness. As Chuck Colson once observed, the American church is 2000 miles wide and half an inch deep — an evaluation borne out by George Barna's research, which shows that only 9% of 'born-again' adults hold to a Biblical worldview related to the most basic theological issues (Was Jesus both God and man? How are we saved? What does it mean to be born-again? Is Truth absolute or relative? Is the Bible true? Is Satan real?). As Barna points out, Christians in America don't act like Jesus because we don't think like Jesus.

I believe that we should take time to consider every affliction and sickness in our lives and try to come to an understanding as to why the Lord has laid it upon us, instead of just running off after a quick fix. The history of medicine shows that the great advances were made when men tried to figure out what caused something, instead of immediately resorting to unproven remedies.

There may be the imposition of an affliction to sanctify our lives, to moderate our behaviour and get us to focus on our mission. Affliction can bring with it humility in a person's life. 2Co 12:7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. 2Co 12:8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. 2Co 12:9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness (ἀσθένεια = astheneia). Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities (ἀσθένεια = astheneia), that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Paul seeks the Lord for relief from an affliction and tries to understand the reason for it.

What was the thorn in the flesh? Was it a sickness or something else? It seems to me quite strange that the Lord would give a saint a vision of heaven and then punish him for looking. That He would lift him to glory and counterbalance that with a sickness. Peter, James and John were not given a sickness after they came down from the Mount of Transfiguration. Paul may have been blinded on the Damascus road after he saw Jesus but it was temporary blindness. So what did Paul have?

The words 'weakness' and 'infirmity' are the same ($\dot{\alpha}\sigma\theta\dot{\epsilon}\nu\epsilon\iota\alpha$ = astheneia) and has elsewhere the idea of frailty, 1Co 15:43 It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness ($\dot{\alpha}\sigma\theta\dot{\epsilon}\nu\epsilon\iota\alpha$ = astheneia); it is raised in power: The frailty of our current state is contrast with the resurrection state.

In the OT the "thorn" was often used to describe the effect of the opponents of Israel. *Jos 23:13 Know for a certainty that the LORD your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you. Jdg 2:3 Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you. The foreign nations would be a constant affliction to Israel, they would be a thorn to prick them and remind them of their duty to God.*

My suggestion then is, that Paul had a wonderful revelation, 2Co 12:2 I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. It profoundly affected him and it 'lifted him up' just as I am sure it would to each of us, to have a glimpse of heaven. It might have been so profound that it was all he could do to keep his feet on the ground. It was possible that he would be so heavenly minded to be no earthly use, so he needed to be brought back to his task. He needed to be reminded of what he had to do as an apostle and so the world about him would remind him and "shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes". The enemies that he is up against remind him, satan pricked him to his duty. So he can say, 2Co 12:10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

The human frailty that Paul bore became a target for satan but through frailty he was strong through Christ. We might see the same thought in this verse, 2Co 4:7 Our bodies are made of clay, yet we have the treasure of the Good News in them. This shows that the superior power of this treasure belongs to God and doesn't come from us. GW. Paul was not being cured of the consequences of his spiritual experience, he is given instead a permanent reminder of the consequences. But he is given an answer, and an explanation and the grace to bear with it. The ultimate cure will be to permanently enter that heaven he saw.

Perhaps we go wrong sometimes when dealing with sickness, because we generally only see two ways of dealing with it. We either pray about itm or we go to a doctor. Seldom do we ever try and consider if there is a spiritual reason for our suffering.

Then there may be a satanic influence brought about by a judgement of the church about sinful behaviour. 1Co 5:1 It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.1Co 5:5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. In the event of such an action, repentance and seeking forgiveness are the only solution, although the consequences of the sin may remain. The sole aim of this process is to save the spirit in the day of the Lord Jesus and to strip away the fleshly desires. Again it is like the thorn in the flesh.

The sin that Paul deals with in Corinth is common in the churches. Sexual sins are destructive of families and communities of the faithful. Peragamos and Thyatira are two Churches in the book of Revelation that have problems with fornication. We are exhorted, 1Co 6:18 Flee fornication. Every

sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.

George Barna reported that in America,

"Of the ten moral behaviours evaluated, a majority of Americans believed that each of three activities were 'morally acceptable.' Those included gambling (61%), co-habitation (60%), and sexual fantasies (59%). Nearly half of the adult population felt that two other behaviours were morally acceptable: having an abortion (45%) and having a sexual relationship with someone of the opposite sex other than their spouse (42%). About one-third of the population gave the stamp of approval to pornography (38%), profanity (36%), drunkenness (35%) and homosexual sex (30%). The activity that garnered the least support was using non-prescription drugs (17%). ...Less than one out of every ten evangelical Christians maintained that adultery, gay sex, pornography, profanity, drunkenness and abortion are morally acceptable."

We have ranged over this subject many times and we need to look for solutions not statistics. Paul says, 1Co 7:5 Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that satan tempt you not for your incontinency. Marriages require work and that covers sexual relationships. Marriage is the means given by our Creator to indulge our sexual desires. Sex is not a bargaining tool, a matter of indifference or unnecessary for a safe marriage. If you want the devil to get into your marriage and create issues that will break it apart, then give up on sexual relationships. As we saw a few chapters ago on the subject of pornography, the devil will try to get us to look for "different" ways to satisfy our desires. As the Prayer Book rightly observed of marriage, "It was ordained for a remedy against sin, and to avoid fornication; that such persons as have not the gift of continency might marry, and keep themselves undefiled members of Christ's body".

But marriage is not all about sex and reproduction. It is primarily a spiritual relationship. It will block the devil if that relationship is strengthened further by developing it as Christ and the church. *Eph 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; Eph 5:26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, Eph 5:27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. Eph 5:28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.*

Once again we are looking at another aspect of our relationship with Christ. Our marriages will reflect our relationship with Christ. The whole point of marriage, is that it is about Christ and should reflect Christ.

Have you considered the paradox that a man will spend time in prayer with Jesus but not with his own wife? He will seek Jesus for enlightenment and encouragement, yet will go through a day without giving an encouraging word of faith to his wife. He may never even share a blessing over food, or what the Lord has shown him and yet he will call himself a Christian. He lives spiritually, the life of faith like a bachelor, selfish and self-contained. Is that not the work or the devil? Marriage requires a lot of effort if it is to be a Christian marriage that will fight off the devil and this is one

arena where two people are fighting together. Communication is an important issue. **If a man does not talk to his wife the devil will** and that is what happened when Adam did not keep Eve informed about God's words. A news item that I read this week suggested that a "Fifth of UK couples are close to break-up":

Researchers looked at data from the Understanding Society survey of 20,980 people which asked people how often they argued, how frequently they considered divorce and regretted the relationship, and the extent of their unhappiness. They said their findings suggested 2.87 million people, which equates to 18% of married or cohabiting couples, were living in "distressed" relationships, where the strains were deemed to be "clinically significant" by counsellors. The number of "distressed" relationships reached a high in 2011 and 2012 but have not yet returned to pre-recession levels, the data showed. "There is a pattern of relationship strain increasing during recession years - where *economic* strain increases, for example low income, unemployment, a build-up of debt, the strain on the relationship increases," Dr Marjoribanks said.

The research also found:

- One in 10 partners reported at least occasionally regretting getting married or living together, while 9% said they at least occasionally considered divorce or separation
- Nearly half (49%) of partners reported at least occasionally quarrelling, with 6.8% reporting severe levels
- Parents of children under 16 were slightly more likely to be in distressed relationships (22%), and becoming a parent for the first time was "one of life's events most likely to reduce relationship quality".

Dr Marjoribanks said many couples suffered in silence for years and only sought help when it was too late to salvage their relationship. Jan Artingstall from Therapy Cheshire, who is listed in the Counselling Directory, believes people today spend so much time communicating via text and social media that they have forgotten how to talk.

We are living in an age of virtual relationships where failure to communicate leads to a failure to resolve issues.

Some final words on this whole subject of demonization and the Christian.

- Never accept moral failure as a reason to give up, it is a reason to go on. We have an Advocate with the Father and He will save us to the uttermost.
- Make deliverance from evil a daily prayer and search where satan has attempted to disrupt your walk. Even better, consciously start the day's walk with the Lord and keep Him with you at all times. Give time to the word and sharpen your sword. The feeblest Christians I know are the ones who give least time to the Scripture.
- Finally, there is nothing more off putting than a miserable Christian. I believe that satan and his host rejoice when they see depressed, sad, sour faced Christians. Have we

nothing to rejoice in? Has God only strewn our way with thorns and made us ever tearful? Is there not one blessing in my life that I cannot shout from the roof tops? We do the devil's work for him when we are miserable. What does Paul encourage us to do? Php 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice. It was a command to rejoice in the OT Deu12:7 And there ye shall eat before the LORD your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the LORD thy God hath blessed thee. Psa 3:21 For our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name. 1Th 5:16 Rejoice evermore.

Cowper said, "satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees" to which I add, "And if that saint rejoice in HIM, the devil's voice will ever dim."

21. Christ the Creator of disease

Having gained some small understanding of the nature, cause and cure of sickness and disease in the NT, it is now time to examine them in the larger context of creation as a whole. In a Scientific America article (Evolution and the Origins of Disease by Randolph M. Nesse and George C. Williams. Copyright 1998 Scientific American, Inc.), the authors, both evolutionists, comment:

The body is a bundle of such jarring contradictions. For each exquisite heart valve, we have a wisdom tooth. Strands of DNA direct the development of the 10 trillion cells that make up a human adult but then permit his or her steady deterioration and eventual death. Our immune system can identify and destroy a million kinds of foreign matter, yet many bacteria can still kill us. These contradictions make it appear as if the body was designed by a team of superb engineers with occasional interventions by Rube Goldberg³⁶.

In fact, such seeming incongruities make sense but only when we investigate the origins of the body's vulnerabilities while keeping in mind the wise words of distinguished geneticist Theodosius Dobzhansky: "Nothing in biology makes sense except in the light of evolution." (*Sic!*) Evolutionary biology is, of course, the scientific foundation for all biology, and biology is the foundation for all medicine. To a surprising degree, however, evolutionary biology is just now being recognized as a basic medical science. The enterprise of studying medical problems in an evolutionary context has been termed Darwinian medicine.

Most medical research tries to explain the causes of an individual's disease and seeks therapies to cure or relieve deleterious conditions. These efforts are traditionally based on consideration of proximate issues, the straightforward study of the body's anatomic and physiological mechanisms as they currently exist. In contrast, Darwinian medicine asks why the body **is designed** (by who?) in a way that makes us all vulnerable to problems like cancer, atherosclerosis, depression and choking, thus offering a broader

³⁶ Reuben Garrett Lucius "Rube" Goldberg (San Francisco July 4, 1883 – Hawthorne New York December 7, 1970) was an American cartoonist, sculptor, author, engineer, and inventor. He is best known for a series of popular cartoons depicting complicated gadgets that perform simple tasks in indirect, convoluted ways, similar to Heath Robinson devices in the UK.

context in which to conduct research. The evolutionary explanations for the body's flaws fall into surprisingly few categories.

First, some discomforting conditions, such as pain, fever, cough, vomiting and anxiety, are actually neither diseases nor design defects (by who?) but rather are evolved defences. Second, conflicts with other organisms—Escherichia coli (e coli) or crocodiles, for instance—are a fact of life. Third, some circumstances, such as the ready availability of dietary fats, are so recent that natural selection has not yet had a chance to deal with them. Fourth, the body may fall victim to tradeoffs between a trait's benefits and its costs; a textbook example is the sickle cell gene, which also protects against malaria. Finally, the process of natural selection is constrained in ways that leave us with suboptimal design features, as in the case of the mammalian eye (really?).

In another article, "Genetic based human diseases are an ancient evolutionary legacy, Evolutionary geneticists reveal that disease genes emerged very early in evolutionary history" (October 16, 2008)

Tomislav Domazet-Lošo and Diethard Tautz from the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Biology in Plön, Germany, have systematically analysed the time of emergence for a large number of genes, genes which can also initiate diseases. Their studies show for the first time that the majority of these genes were already in existence at the origin of the first cells. The search for further genes, particularly those which are involved in diseases caused by several genetic causes, is thus facilitated. Furthermore, the research results confirm that the basic interconnections are to be found in the function of genes (causing the onset of diseases) can also be found in model organisms (Molecular Biology and Evolution).

The vast majority of these genes trace back to the origin of the first cell. Other large groups emerged more than one billion years ago around the first appearance of multicellular organisms, as well as at the time of origin of bony fishes about 400 million years ago. Surprisingly, they found almost no disease associated genes among those that emerged after the origin of mammals.

These findings suggest that genetic diseases affected primarily ancient cellular processes, which emerged already during the early stages of life on Earth. This leads to the conclusion **that all living organisms** today, i.e. not only humans, will be affected by similar genetic diseases. Furthermore, this implies that genetically caused diseases will never be beaten completely, because they are linked to ancient evolutionary processes.

So, reasons ranging from sub-optimal design, to ancient evolutionary processes, leave a bleak picture of life on earth, which seems from the outset, designed to fail at some point. Of course they never quite get to tell us who the sub-optimal designer was? From the evolutionary perspective, life is just the development process of interactions between environmental factors over time, acting on chemicals. It is a blind process, yet one in to which they invoke design by lifeless processes and a process that atheist Dawkins has termed, "The blind watchmaker". He will realise shortly when he passes into the next world that the Watchmaker is far from blind. *Isa 5:11 Woe unto themthey regard not the work of the LORD, neither consider the operation of his hands*.

What I intend to show is that Creation is not a random outcome of chemical process but an expression of the Character of the Creator. Creation is at heart a demonstration of the moral character of the Creator and His glory. Psa 19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Psa 19:2 Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.....Rom 1:19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. Rom 1:20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

Creation is then, in the first place, the expression of the person of Christ. He is revealed both in the written word, the Scripture and in the created word, the cosmos. Solomon's wisdom enabled him to expose the purpose of the elements of Creation, 1Ki 4:33 And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes. In the world of evolutionists, there is no wisdom, there is just utility and function but no moral value, because there is no overarching purpose. Things just happen. In Christ's creation, there is wisdom and purpose that leads us to moral insights and guidance in our lives. Pro 6:6 Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise. It is a moral Universe.

Christ was no stranger to our world when He came to Bethlehem, after all it was just as He had designed it. He was taking upon Himself the likeness of men *Php 2:7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men*:

We might speculate whether Adam was physically like Jesus? The Biblical view is that man was created out of the dirt, a composite of mud, yet a complete sentient being made in the image of his Maker, Gen 1:27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. Like all the creatures that God made, he was "good". Gen 1:31 And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day. It was more than "good", it was "well good" (so says the language), superlatively good.

It is quite difficult to be definitive what "good" means in terms of the nature of man himself but we can say that ALL was good in the eyes of the Creator, Jesus Christ, it was pleasing to Him. Can we say that man was morally good or perfect in this respect? What we can say, is that he was made capable of sinning. That said, man was exactly what Christ had intended to make in every aspect. *Rev 4:11*

Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

The complete Genome, all the genes, the plans for future mankind, were present in Adam and his wife but we have no idea what the design contained in detail. There are those that would assume that it was completely without what we would call, 'flaws' and that future combinations of genes would not contain any errors. The idea that it was "good" would imply to some that it was perfect, yet this idea makes certain assumptions as to what constituted "good" in the mind of Christ. Joh 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. Joh 1:4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

I might observe that the Creation was 'exceptionally good' but it would be made even better when Christ entered that Creation to rescue it from its fallen condition and take it to another level of development in the heavenlies. Let me state this again. The nature of Adam, his biological content, his spiritual state, his future condition were all part of his creation and fit for the purpose that God had planned for him. All of this would dovetail perfectly with the grand plan to reveal Christ the Creator as the Redeemer of fallen humanity.

I contend that there was in the design of Creation, the redemptive element of Christ the Redeemer. The various designs of certain creatures reflected the nature of this, hidden in types or shadows. For example, the design incorporated features that would morally exclude certain creatures as ritual sacrifices (unclean) and make others perfectly suited for the task (clean). *Joh 1:36 And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!* Lambs were designed with Christ in mind.

We know that Christ was to be the redeemer before the foundations of the world were laid. *Rev* 13:8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain ($\sigma \dot{\phi} \dot{\alpha} \zeta \omega = \text{sphaz} \bar{o}$) from the foundation of the world. If Christ was 'butchered', for that is what the word means, not just that He died but that He was slaughtered, it implies far more than just a normal death.

If then, He was slaughtered from creation, why? Since His death is an atoning death, we must conclude that the purpose of God in creation included the death of Christ. It was not an afterthought, an addendum to a programme that had gone wrong. 1Co 15:3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; If His death was woven into the plan of Creation, who did He die for? Eph 1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: It is to those who will be faithful in Christ, believers. Eph 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:

You will understand by this that I subscribe to the Supralapsarian view. Supralapsarianism (also antelapsarianism) is the view that God's decrees of election and reprobation logically preceded the decree of the fall while infralapsarianism (also called postlapsarianism and sublapsarianism) asserts that God's decrees of election and reprobation, logically succeeded the decree of the fall. In other words, scfipture supports the view that God's choice to elect some and damn others was made before the fall, not after the fall. The contrary idea that these choices were made after the fall, suggests that man has some influence in the process, which I personally do not think that he has. Man cannot control the purpose of God in Christ Jesus.

Paul makes this idea very clear in the Epistle to the Romans. He shows that the electing grace of God was in place before a person had done any deeds at all. Rom 9:11 (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) God's calling was clearly not based upon the future actions of the elect but solely upon His sovereign choice. As Paul goes on to expound in the same chapter, you cannot argue with the Potter.

It would follow on from this that reproductive outcomes, future offspring, would be predetermined such that any genetic requirement for those outcomes would be built in at the Creation. The copy errors and failures to transcribe genes, resulting in diseases, would be built in at Creation. Additionally, the other biological organisms would also play a part as they interacted with mankind. One other factor occurred that had a major impact. It was sin and the consequential curse.

Gen 3:16 He said to the woman, "I will increase your pain and your labor when you give birth to children. Yet, you will long for your husband, and he will rule you." Gen 3:17 Then he said to the man, "You listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree, although I commanded you, 'You must never eat its fruit.' The ground is cursed because of you. Through hard work you will eat food that comes from it every day of your life. Gen 3:18 The ground will grow thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat wild plants. Gen 3:19 By the sweat of your brow, you will produce food to eat until you return to the ground, because you were taken from it. You are dust, and you will return to dust." GW.

The term epigenetics³⁷ refers to heritable changes in gene expression (active versus inactive genes) that does not involve changes to the underlying DNA sequence. Epigenetic change, is a regular and natural occurrence but can also be influenced by several factors including age, the environment/lifestyle, and disease state. Epigenetic modifications can manifest as commonly as the manner in which cells terminally differentiate to end up as skin cells, liver cells, brain cells, etc. Or, epigenetic change can have more damaging effects that can result in diseases like cancer. Epigenetics is the study, in the field of genetics, of cellular and physiological phenotypic³⁸ trait variations that are caused by external or environmental factors, that switch genes on and off and affect how cells read genes.

Studies have already shown how a pregnant mother's diet can affect her child's risk of obesity epigenetically.

Szyf and Meaney considered a hypothesis as improbable as it was profound: If diet and chemicals can cause epigenetic changes, could certain experiences — child neglect, drug abuse or other severe stresses — also set off epigenetic changes to the DNA inside the neurons of a person's brain? That question turned out to be the basis of a new field, behavioural epigenetics, now so vibrant it has spawned dozens of studies and suggested profound new treatments to heal the brain.

According to the new insights of behavioural epigenetics, traumatic experiences in our past, or in our recent ancestors' past, leave molecular scars adhering to our DNA. Jews whose great-grandparents were chased from their Russian shtetls (towns); Chinese

³⁷ http://www.whatisepigenetics.com/fundamentals/

³⁸ Phenotype is the physical appearance resulting from the inherited information. e.g. someone with blue eyes has the phenotype blue eyes.

whose grandparents lived through the ravages of the Cultural Revolution; young immigrants from Africa whose parents survived massacres; adults of every ethnicity who grew up with alcoholic or abusive parents — all carry with them more than just memories.

Like silt deposited on the cogs of a finely tuned machine after the seawater of a tsunami recedes, our experiences, and those of our forebears, are never gone, even if they have been forgotten. They become a part of us, a molecular residue holding fast to our genetic scaffolding. The DNA remains the same, but psychological and behavioural tendencies are inherited. You might have inherited not just your grandmother's knobby knees, but also her predisposition toward depression caused by the neglect she suffered as a newborn.

Or not. If your grandmother was adopted by nurturing parents, you might be enjoying the boost she received thanks to their love and support. The mechanisms of behavioural epigenetics underlie not only deficits and weaknesses but strengths and resiliencies, too. And for those unlucky enough to descend from miserable or withholding grandparents, emerging drug treatments could reset not just mood, but the epigenetic changes themselves. Like grandmother's vintage dress, you could wear it or have it altered. The genome has long been known as the blueprint of life, but the epigenome is life's 'Etch A Sketch': Shake it hard enough, and you can wipe clean the family curse.

What we are beginning to see is that the genome, the book of life, can be affected by the circumstances of life. We can see that the change in environment brought about by Adam's sin, could also impact on the way genes were expressed in future generations. *Gen 3:17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Gen 3:18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; Gen 3:19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*

Sin made life far less easy and childbirth far more sorrowful. It was now hard labour digged out of a cursed landscape. It was a life that dragged a sweating body to the dinner table, worn out by labours, every day a reminder that existence for a majority of humanity was hard labour. If by the grace of God you live in the industrialised developed world you are in a minority. For most people, Adam's curse is working as well as it ever did and if we are well, it is probably because we are living off of the cheap labour of the poor.

- Nearly 1/2 of the world's population, more than 3.7 billion people, live on less than \$2.50 a day. More than 1.3 billion live in extreme poverty less than \$1.25 a day.
- 80% of the world population, 6 billion people, live on less than \$10 a day.
- 1 billion children worldwide are living in poverty. According to UNICEF, 22,000 children die each day due to poverty.
- 805 million people worldwide do not have enough food to eat. Food banks are especially important in providing food for people that can't afford it themselves. Run a food drive

- outside your local grocery store so people in your community have enough to eat. Sign up for Supermarket Stakeout.
- More than 750 million people lack adequate access to clean drinking water. Diarrhoea
 caused by inadequate drinking water, sanitation, and hand hygiene kills an estimated
 842,000 people every year globally, or approximately 2,300 people per day.
- In 2011, 165 million children under the age 5 were stunted (reduced rate of growth and development) due to chronic malnutrition.

It is not a healthy planet.

22. The necessity of Death

Last time we broached the science of epigenetics and the fact that nurture can affect nature, so to speak, and that there could be different outcomes for an individual life, depending upon the circumstances of that life. The Christian parent is, for good reason, encouraged to use their influence to shape the future of their offspring, *Pro 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.*

I came across an interesting example of this. While studying brain scans to search for patterns that correlated with psychopathic behaviour³⁹, James Fallon found that his own brain fitted the profile.

One afternoon in October 2005, neuroscientist James Fallon was looking at brain scans of serial killers. As part of a research project at UC Irvine, he was sifting through thousands of PET⁴⁰ scans to find anatomical patterns in the brain that correlated with psychopathic tendencies in the real world.

"I was looking at many scans, scans of murderers mixed in with schizophrenics, depressives and other, normal brains," he says. "Out of serendipity, I was also doing a study on Alzheimer's and as part of that, had brain scans from me and everyone in my family right on my desk." "I got to the bottom of the stack, and saw this scan that was obviously pathological," he says, noting that it showed low activity in certain areas of the frontal and temporal lobes linked to empathy, morality and self-control. Knowing that it belonged to a member of his family, Fallon checked his lab's PET machine for an error (it was working perfectly fine) and then decided he simply had to break the blinding that prevented him from knowing whose brain was pictured. When he looked up the code, he was greeted by an unsettling revelation: the psychopathic brain pictured in the scan was his own.

Many of us would hide this discovery and never tell a soul, out of fear or embarrassment of being labelled a psychopath. Perhaps because boldness and disinhibition are noted psychopathic tendencies, Fallon has gone all in towards the opposite direction, telling the world about his finding in a Technology Entertainment and Design Talk, an NPR interview and now a new book published last month, "he Psychopath Inside". In it,

³⁹ Psychopathy also known as—though sometimes differentiated from—sociopathy is traditionally defined as a personality disorder characterized by enduring antisocial behaviour, diminished empathy and remorse, and disinhibited or bold behaviour

⁴⁰ Positron Emission Tomography

Fallon seeks to reconcile how he—a happily married family man—could demonstrate the same anatomical patterns that marked the minds of serial killers.

"I've never killed anybody, or raped anyone," he says. "So the first thing I thought was that maybe my hypothesis was wrong, and that these brain areas are not reflective of psychopathy or murderous behaviour." But when he underwent a series of genetic tests, he got more bad news. "I had all these high-risk alleles (an allele is a variant form of a gene) for aggression, violence and low empathy," he says, such as a variant of the MAO-A gene that has been linked with aggressive behaviour. Eventually, based on further neurological and behavioural research into psychopathy, he decided he was indeed a psychopath—just a relatively good kind, what he and others call a "pro-social psychopath," someone who has difficulty feeling true empathy for others but still keeps his behaviour roughly within socially-acceptable bounds.

It wasn't entirely a shock to Fallon, as he'd always been aware that he was someone especially motivated by power and manipulating others, he says. Additionally, his family line included seven alleged murderers, including Lizzie Borden, infamously accused of killing her father and stepmother in 1892 with an axe.

But the fact that a person with the genes and brain of a psychopath could end up a non-violent, stable and successful scientist made Fallon reconsider the ambiguity of the term. Psychopathy, after all, doesn't appear as a formal diagnosis in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders in part because it encompasses such a wide range of symptoms. Not all psychopaths kill; some, like Fallon, exhibit other sorts of psychopathic behaviour.

"I'm obnoxiously competitive. I won't let my grandchildren win games. I'm kind of an ass****, and I do jerky things that p*** people off," he says. "But while I'm aggressive, my aggression is sublimated. I'd rather beat someone in an argument than beat them up." Why has Fallon been able to temper his behaviour, while other people with similar genetics and brain turn violent and end up in prison? Fallon was once a self-proclaimed genetic determinist, but his views on the influence of genes on behaviour have evolved. He now believes that his childhood helped prevent him from heading down a scarier path.

"I was loved, and that protected me," he says. Partly as a result of a series of miscarriages that preceded his birth, he was given an especially heavy amount of attention from his parents, and he thinks that played a key role. This corresponds to recent research: His particular allele for a serotonin transporter protein present in the brain, for example, is believed to put him at higher risk for psychopathic tendencies. But further analysis has shown that it can affect the development of the ventromedial prefrontal cortex (the area with characteristically low activity in psychopaths) in complex ways: It can open up the region to be more significantly affected by environmental influences, and so a positive (or negative) childhood is especially pivotal in determining behavioural outcomes.

Of course, there's also a third ingredient, in addition to genetics and environment: free will. "Since finding all this out and looking into it, I've made an effort to try to change my behaviour," Fallon says. "I've more consciously been doing things that are considered 'the right thing to do,' and thinking more about other people's feelings." But he added, "At the same time, I'm not doing this because I'm suddenly nice, I'm doing it because of pride—because I want to show to everyone and myself that I can pull it off."

In our study, we are now trying to understand what changes occurred in association with the fall of mankind, that resulted in physical decline, sickness and death. One way or another, when man sinned, there were consequences and the foremost consequence was death. *Gen 2:16 And Jehovah God commanded the man, saying, Eating you may eat of every tree in the garden; Gen 2:17 but of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil you may not eat, for in the day that you eat of it, dying you shall die.* LITV. That death would have two consequences. Firstly and most obviously the cessation of communion with Christ (The Creator) in Paradise and secondly the physical death of the body, *Gen 3:19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.* Adam would crumble away to his original compounds, dust to dust.

There was a hope that lay in the Tree of Life but that was quickly barred, *Gen 3:22* And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: If the tree of life is also symbolic of Christ, it gives us an important lesson. We cannot live forever with our God if we are in sin. Life is cut off completely but the way back to that tree of life is made possible through the suffering Saviour. That however, is another exposition.

The consequence of sin, that is, death, physical and spiritual, passed down to all of Adam's descendants, Rom 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: Simply stated, the consequence of Adam's sin is present in every human being. In fact the language of Romans 5:12 suggests an active participation in sin by all mankind "inasmuch as all sinned" LITV.

Yet there is hope, 1Co 15:21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 1Co 15:22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. It was this verse that convinced me of the error of evolutionism. Adam had to be a historical reality, not a biblical myth. It is life through Christ as contrast to death in Adam, Joh 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. The Tree of Life is Christ. Rev 22:13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Rev 22:14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

The reality is that the physical body, like this physical Universe, is doomed to die. Our bodies have been corrupted beyond repair and must be remade not mended. It must be planted in the ground, sown in corruption, raised in incorruption. Death beckons us all and whether we enjoy healing or not, it is temporary. Even if we died here and were raised again from the dead here, it is for a short season only. We shall again sleep with our fathers. Deu 31:16 And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers; Like David, we pass this way but once, we serve our generation and

we sleep with our fathers. Act 13:36 For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption:

As Christians, and as dying Christians, we must acknowledge that the consequences of sin will take our bodies to the grave, but through Christ, take us to the grave in peace. We cannot side step this issue and we cannot fixate on physical healing as a permanent solution to what will be an inevitable outcome, death. John Sandford, the eminent Christian geneticist makes an interesting observation about our decline. He says, "Picture a ten year old car. It is degenerating in all possible ways. Install new windshield wipers. Has the car stopped degenerating? There has certainly been an improvement, but not the type of improvement that can reverse the ubiquitous and systematic degeneration". When Jesus healed people, he fixed a broken component but the rest of the body was still degenerating. That is the reality of any healing. I see no evidence that Jesus' healing is permanent, that is, for the duration of life and that a recurrence of the cause could not return and happen again.

There are plenty of so called healing ministries out there in the world but few Christian ministries on preparing for death. It is as if everyone works hard to cheat the hangman. There is a certainty of death that far exceeds the certainty of healing and yet we focus our efforts on the lesser certainty, healing. It is as if we want this life so much more than we ever want heaven, that we will do all that we can to avoid death. For the Puritans, death was not an enemy. When the Puritans spoke of 'dying well', they were looking beyond the physical realm to the spiritual one. For them, to die well was to die in a state of peace with God, anticipating the joy of being forever with Christ. Dying was something they prepared for by living, what J. I. Packer calls "the forward-tilted life"—a life lived with the mind focused on "the ultimate destination." One of my favourite puritans is John Flavel and I will mention him because when he writes about death it is from profound personal experience

John Flavel (1628-1691) was a Puritan minister born in 1628 in Bromsgrove, Worcestershire. He was the son of Richard Flavel, a minister who died of the plague in 1665 while in prison for nonconformity. John Flavel was educated by his father in the ways of religion, then "plied his studies hard" as a commoner at University College, Oxford. In 1650, he was ordained by the presbytery at Salisbury. He settled in Diptford, where he honed his numerous gifts. He married Joan Randall, a godly woman, who died while giving birth to their first child in 1655. The baby died in the childbirth as well. After a year of mourning, Flavel married Elizabeth Stapell and was again blessed with a close, God-fearing marriage, as well as children. Flavel was four times married: first to Jane Randal; secondly, to Elizabeth Morries; thirdly, to Ann Downe; and, lastly, to a daughter of the Rev. George Jeffries. Flavel well understood death not just in his family but in the lives of the seafarers of Dartmouth where he lived and later ministered.

One of his parishioners wrote of Flavel, "I could say much, though not enough of the excellency of his preaching; of his seasonable, suitable, and spiritual matter; of his plain expositions of Scripture; his talking method, his genuine and natural deductions, his convincing arguments, his clear and powerful demonstrations, his heart-searching applications, and his comfortable supports to those that were afflicted in conscience. In short, that person must have a very soft head, or a very hard heart, or both, that could sit under his ministry unaffected". Luke Short, remembered listening to Flavel preach in England when he was fifteen years old. The text was, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha." Eighty-five years after hearing Flavel preach on the horror

of dying under God's curse, the Spirit of God effectually converted him at the age of one hundred as he meditated on that very sermon!

Flavel was ejected from the pulpit in 1662 for nonconformity, but he continued to meet secretly with his parishioners in conventicles⁴¹. In 1665, when the Five Mile Act went into effect, Flavel moved to Slapton, which was beyond the five-mile limit of legal disturbance. There he ministered to many people in his congregation. At times, he would preach secretly in the woods to larger numbers of people, sometimes as late as midnight. Once, soldiers rushed in and dispersed the congregation. Several of the fugitives were apprehended and fined, but the remainder brought Flavel to another wooded area where he continued his sermon.

In 1685, Flavel returned to Dartmouth, where his ministry was confined to his home. He preached every Sunday and on many weekday evenings to people who crowded into his home. That same year he was burned in effigy by a mob, but he pressed on, praying for his beloved Dartmouth, "O that there were not a prayerless family in this town!" In 1687, King James II issued another indulgence for Nonconformists that allowed Flavel to preach publicly once again. This freedom was later augmented with the coming of William of Orange and the Glorious Revolution in 1688. Flavel's congregation built a large church upon his return to the pulpit. His last four years of public preaching, which began with his sermons on Revelation 3:20, "Behold I stand at the door and knock," were greatly blessed. Yet he was aging rapidly. Speaking for himself and his colleagues, he wrote, "We have long borne the burden and heat of the day; we are veteran soldiers almost worn out." While visiting Exeter to preach on June 6, 1691, Flavel suffered a massive stroke and died that same evening at the age of sixty-three. His final words were, "I know that it will be well with me."

In his treatise "Keeping the Heart" (1668) Flavel writes:

"I shall offer several considerations calculated to help the people of God in time of sickness, to keep their hearts loose from all earthly objects, and cheerfully willing to die:

- 1. Death is harmless to the people of God; its shafts leave no sting in them. Why then are you afraid that your sickness may be unto death? If you were to die in your sins; if death were to reign over you as a tyrant, to feed upon you as a lion doth upon his prey; if death to you were to be the precursor of hell, then you might reasonably startle and shrink back from it with horror and dismay. But if your sins are blotted out; if Christ has vanquished death in your behalf, so that you have nothing to encounter but bodily pain, and possibly not even that; if death will be to you the harbinger of heaven, why should you be afraid? Why not bid it welcome? It cannot hurt you; it is easy and harmless; it is like putting off your clothes, of taking rest.
- 2. It may keep your heart from shrinking back, to consider that death is necessary to fit you for the full enjoyment of God. Whether you are willing to die or not, there certainly is no other way to complete the happiness of your soul. Death must do you the kind office to remove this veil of flesh, this animal life which separates you from God, before you can see and enjoy him fully. "Whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord." And who would not be willing to die for the perfect enjoyment of God?

⁴¹ a secret or unlawful religious meeting, typically of nonconformists.

Methinks one should look and sigh, like a prisoner, through the grates of this mortality: "O that I had wings like a dove, then would I fly away and be at rest." Indeed most men need patience to die; but a saint, who understands what death will introduce him to, rather needs patience to live. On his deathbed he should often look out and listen to his Lord's coming; and when he perceives his dissolution to be near, he should say, "The voice of my beloved; behold he cometh, leaping over the mountains. skipping over the hills."

- 3. Consider that the happiness of heaven commences immediately after death. That happiness will not be deferred till the resurrection; but as soon as death has passed upon you, your soul will be swallowed up in life. When you have once loosed from this shore, you shall be quickly wafted to the shore of a glorious eternity. And can you not say, I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ? Did the soul and body die together, or did they sleep till the resurrection, as some have fancied, it would have been folly for Paul to desire a dissolution for the enjoyment of Christ; because he would have enjoyed more in the body than he could have enjoyed out of it. The Scripture speaks of but two ways in which the soul can properly live: viz. by faith and vision. These two comprehend its present and future existence. Now, if when faith fails, sight should not immediately succeed, what would become of the soul? But the truth on this subject is clearly revealed in Scripture. See Luk 23:43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise. Joh 14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also., &c. What a blessed change then will death make in your condition! Rouse up, dying saint, and rejoice; let death do his work, that the angels may conduct your soul to the world of light.
- 4. It may increase your willingness to die, to reflect that by death God often removes his people out of the way of great troubles and temptations. When some extraordinary calamity is coming upon the world, God sometimes removes his saints out of the way of the evil. Thus Methuselah died the year before the flood; Augustine a little before the sacking of Hippo; Pareus just before the taking of Heidelburg. Luther observes that all the apostles died before the destruction of Jerusalem; and Luther himself died before the wars broke out in Germany. How it may be that by death you will escape some grievous trial, which you could not and need not endure. But if no extraordinary trouble would come upon you in case your life were prolonged, yet God desires by death to relieve you from innumerable evils and burdens which are inseparable from the present state. Thus you will be delivered from indwelling sin, which is the greatest trouble; from all temptations from whatever source; from bodily tempers and embarrassments; and from all the afflictions and sorrows of this life. The days of your mourning will be ended, and God will wipe away all tears from your eyes. Why then should you not hasten to depart?
- 5. If you still linger, like Lot in Sodom, what are your pleas and pretences for a longer life? Why are you unwilling to die? Are you concerned for the welfare of your relations? If so, are you anxious for their temporal support? Then let the Word of God satisfy you: "Leave thy fatherless children to me, I will keep them alive, and let thy widows trust in

me." Luther says, in his last will, "Lord, thou hast given me a wife and children, I have nothing to leave them, but I commit them unto thee. O Father of the fatherless and Judge of widows, nourish, keep and teach them." But are you concerned for the spiritual welfare of your relations? Remember that you cannot convert them, if you should live; and God can make your prayers and counsels effectual when you are dead. Perhaps you desire to serve God longer in this world. But if he has nothing further for you to do here, why not say with David, "Here am I, let him do what seemeth him good.""

Can anyone lay a claim to Christ who has not accepted death over this life? *Php 1:21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain*. What is wrong with this generation is that it puts this life above the next. When death comes, who will be able to say with dear John Flavel, "I know that it will be well with me."

23. Facing the certainty of death

The Puritan view of death is certainly at odds with the way death is viewed today. Perhaps that was then in part due to the ever present shadow of death in the absence of cures. This observation by a modern GP is very interesting:

The ER physician and I⁴² talk briefly about what can be done. The stroke has driven the patient's blood pressure through the roof, aggravating his heart failure, which in turn is threatening his fragile kidneys. The stroke is bad enough that, given his disabilities related to his Parkinson's, he will probably never walk again. In elderly patients with a web of medical conditions, the potential complications of any therapy are often large and the benefits small. It's a medical checkmate; all moves end in abdication. I head to the ER. If I'm lucky, the family will accept the news that, in a time when we can separate conjoined twins and reattach severed limbs, people still wear out and die of old age. If I'm lucky, the family will recognize that their loved one's life is nearing its end.

But I'm not always lucky. The family may ask me to use my physician superpowers to push the patient's tired body further down the road, with little thought as to whether the additional suffering to get there will be worth it. For many Americans, modern medical advances have made death seem more like an option than an obligation. We want our loved ones to live as long as possible, but our culture has come to view death as a medical failure rather than life's natural conclusion.

These unrealistic expectations often begin with an overestimation of modern medicine's power to prolong life, a misconception fuelled by the dramatic increase in the American life span over the past century. Doing something often feels better than doing nothing. Inaction feeds the sense of guilt-ridden ineptness family members already feel as they ask themselves, "Why can't I do more for this person I love so much?"

Opting to try all forms of medical treatment and procedures to assuage this guilt, is also emotional life insurance: When their loved one does die, family members can tell themselves, "We did everything we could for Mom." In my experience, this is a stronger

⁴²Craig Bowron MD https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/our-unrealistic-views-of-death-through-a-doctors-eyes/2012/01/31/gIQAeaHpJR_story.html

inclination than the equally valid (and perhaps more honest) admission that "we sure put Dad through the wringer those last few months."

At a certain stage of life, aggressive medical treatment can become sanctioned torture. When a case such as this comes along, nurses, physicians and therapists sometimes feel conflicted and immoral. We've committed ourselves to relieving suffering, not causing it. A retired nurse once wrote to me: "I am so glad I don't have to hurt old people any more."

For most of us living with sidewalks and street lamps, death has become a rarely witnessed, foreign event. The most up-close death my urban-raised children have experienced is the occasional walleye being reeled toward doom on a family fishing trip or a neighbourhood squirrel sentenced to death-by-Firestone. The chicken most people eat comes in plastic wrap, not at the end of a swinging cleaver. The farmers I take care of aren't in any more of a hurry to die than my city-dwelling patients, but when death comes, they are familiar with it. They've seen it, smelled it, had it under their fingernails. A dying cow is not the same as a person nearing death, but living off the land strengthens one's understanding that all living things eventually die.

Mass urbanization hasn't been the only thing to alienate us from the circle of life. Rising affluence has allowed us to isolate senescence. Before nursing homes, assisted-living centres and in-home nurses, grandparents, their children and their grandchildren were often living under the same roof, where everyone's struggles were plain to see. In 1850, 70 percent of white elderly adults lived with their children. By 1950, 21 percent of the overall population lived in multigenerational homes, and today that figure is only 16 percent. Sequestering our elderly keeps most of us from knowing what it's like to grow old.

This physical and emotional distance becomes obvious as we make decisions that accompany life's end. Suffering is like a fire: Those who sit closest feel the most heat; a picture of a fire gives off no warmth. That's why it's typically the son or daughter who has been physically closest to an elderly parent's pain, who is the most willing to let go. Sometimes an estranged family member is "flying in next week to get all this straightened out." This is usually the person who knows the least about her struggling parent's health; she'll have problems bringing her white horse as carry-on luggage. This person may think she is being driven by compassion, but a good deal of what got her on the plane was the guilt and regret of living far away and having not done any of the heavy lifting in caring for her parent.

We have drawn a veil across death because it is an inconvenient truth. Our forbearers understood it better than we do because it was ever present. The diseases which we can master today were visitations of death back then and in a sense this new knowledge is pushing back the frontier of death but not removing it. It is as the article we have just quoted suggests, alienating us from the circle of life.

We have seen a lot of press coverage over the past weeks on the subject of growing human organs in pigs, because there is a shortage of organs for transplants. While many fear the resulting

Chimeras⁴³, the reality that is not being addressed is, that people will still die even if they have transplants. This year (2016), the world's longest surviving heart transplant patient has died 33 years after his life-saving operation. John McCafferty was officially recognised by Guinness World Records in 2013 after his life-saving transplant at Harefield Hospital in west London on October 20, 1982. He was told the transplant would only add five years to his life at the time but he went on to live for more than three decades with the new heart until he died of sepsis and renal failure, aged 73, at Milton Keynes Hospital. He had been given a series of drugs to encourage the acceptance of the new heart but this lowered his resistance to infection and ultimately led to his death.

It is not for me to judge whether he benefitted humanity as a result of those extra years but it does not appear that he made any effort to secure an interest in the life to come. Perhaps those ancestors of ours who could not draw upon medicine for temporary repairs were spiritually better off for it, because their only hope was in their Maker. Yet even many in the Bible who had a communion with the Lord found it difficult to contemplate death, 2Ki 20:1 In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live. 2Ki 20:2 Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the LORD, saying, 2Ki 20:3 I beseech thee, O LORD, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore. The Lord graciously relented and granted him 15 more years but he still died, although he also did some good things. 15 years is not a long time.

Perhaps Hezekiah was like so many OT saints, limited in his knowledge of the life to come. It is primarily with Jesus, that we begin to understand what the life to come is about. It is described in terms of a kingdom, the Kingdom of God or Heaven. It is as if a window is being opened and we discover that there is a place prepared for us there with Him. Rev 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. Rev 21:2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. Rev 21:3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. Rev 21:4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

We shall be healed of death by Jesus, of that there is no doubt. It is the ultimate healing and it is permanent healing, but not yet. He will not stop us dying here but when we have passed out of this life we shall be healed of death. *There shall be no more death*. The things that contribute to death will be gone, the curse is lifted. *Rev 22:3 And there shall be no more curse:* but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: Rev 22:4 And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

Somehow, there will be a transformation of our very being, whether through increased understanding and knowledge or whether through the ability to comprehend the breadth and depth of the Creator's works. The transformation will remove all sorrow, all sadness, all tears will be wiped away. There will be no crying or pain, neither death. These elements were all part of the 'first

⁴³ Chimera was a monster from Greek mythology that breathes fire and has a lion's head, a goat's body, and a snake's tail.

things', Rev 21:4 and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes, and the death shall not be any more, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor shall there be any more pain, because **the first things did go away**. YLT. I can only reflect that in the absence of the 'first things', we shall find joy and life abundant in the place where angels first rejoiced at our salvation. Luk 15:10 Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. Heaven is a happy place.

We shall not have any worries, aches and pains, sadness and grief and no more funerals to attend.

Why though must I tread this path through the valley of death? Why, when I believe on and in Jesus can I not be whisked away like Enoch or Elijah? We must run our course for the glory of God and it is through us, we bring the Gospel that saved us. Above all of that however, is the fact that the curse must also run its course. Gen 3:19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

Why do we have to die? Let us not view death as a barrier, a wall, an obstacle but let us view it as part of a process. Death is a necessary part of the process whereby the Creator redeems us. 1Co 15:50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. 1Co 15:51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 1Co 15:52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 1Co 15:53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 1Co 15:54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. 1Co 15:55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? 1Co 15:56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. 1Co 15:57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Using the analogy of a seed, the apostle Paul explains to us, 1Co 15:35 But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? 1Co 15:36 Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die:......1Co 15:44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

I am sure that when we are in glory, if it is possible to look back on this life, we shall all wonder why we were not more ready to embrace death, which liberated us from this evil world. Unfortunately, some poor souls are so ready that they take their own lives. As we observed earlier in this chapter, "At a certain stage of life, aggressive medical treatment can become sanctioned torture." How are we to react to those souls who opt to die? Can we say that a person who takes their own life is a sinner?

Of course, it is easy to make these decisions when we are in the peak of fitness and we can be very censorious to those less fortunate and we also have a remarkable sense of self-righteousness that draws a veil across our own sins. We are capable of condemning everyone and every thing that we are not guilty of but we do not like rooting out our own failings and sins in the garbage heap of our own lives. Christianity, you see, is mostly about our own righteousness, the things that we do good but not about our own sins. Remember that, every time you are angry with another Christian, *Mat 5:22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment:* we are guilty before God and if that anger would see him dead we are a murderer.

However on this issue of healing, would we prefer a person to suffer and live in some hope that God is caring for their condition and will eventually deliver them? We throw them Scriptures, like confetti, whether in context or not because that is what we have been taught to do.

But we have made an assumption that human life must be preserved at all costs, even if it comes to hurting the person suffering. Does the 6th Command forbid killing? Of course not. Through the case law, it preserves the righteous and condemns the wicked. The greatest act of love is witnessed in suicide (the act or an instance of giving one's own life voluntarily and intentionally). *Joh* 15:13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. "On March 17, 1912, his 32nd birthday, amid circumstances so excruciating that



we can hardly comprehend them, Captain Lawrence Edward Grace 'Titus' Oates, of the 6th Inniskilling Dragoon Guards walked out of his tent and into the history books with the words: 'I am just going outside and may be some time.'"

Oates sacrificed his life because he was slowing the party down on their return from the South Pole. With severely frostbitten hands and feet and an open war time wound, Oates begged his leader to leave him behind, in his sleeping bag; while Antarctica's winter was setting in. His team mates encouraged him to go on. Mentally and physically it became too much and while a blizzard was blowing outside of the tent, Oates announced he was just going outside and may be some time and was never to be seen again. Eight months later a search party found only his sleeping bag.

Another man, who also died at the age of 32 years, giving his life for others, was Noel Chavasse. Capt Chavasse, who was born in Oxford, packed a lot into a life, which ended in a captured German dugout during the Battle of Passchendaele, also known as the Third Battle of Ypres. He was a prizewinning academic, qualified as a doctor, played rugby and represented Great Britain in the 1908 Olympics, running alongside his twin brother, Christopher, in the 400m. Chavasse was also a committed Christian.

Noel Chavasse was helping wounded soldiers to the end. "He had been wounded himself and the bunker was the ideal place to treat wounded soldiers so they brought them in there," he said. "A German artillery shell came through the back door of the bunker and killed or wounded virtually everyone who was there. "Chavasse was badly wounded in the stomach but spent the next hours trying to find people to help his colleagues from the Liverpool Scottish Regiment. "He was eventually persuaded to go for treatment himself and he died two days later." He was awarded a second VC for this action.

Selfless action which costs your life is the greatest show of love to another human, yet many Christians baulk at the idea of 'suicide'. Whether it is premeditated (Captain Oates) or involuntary (Major Chavasse), it manifests some of the more glorious qualities of humanity to others. In its highest manifestation it is shown in the selfless death of Jesus for His people. Yes, if you think about it, it was suicide. Jesus mission was a suicide mission whereby only His death could save His people from their sins.

You will say that killing yourself because you were sick beyond recovery is not covered by this self sacrifice because it is self-ish sacrifice. Is that so? Are you obliged to submit yourself to medical care to prolong your life at any cost? Are you obligated to exhaust all means of healing? Is the goal the Lord has given us that we must get well at all costs? Is that true? When James speaks of calling the elders to the sick, is that a command? Jas 5:14 Is any sick among you? Iet him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: Jas 5:15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. What of those who have sought the Lord and found His grace sufficient? They may choose to leave the whole matter in God's hands and seek no medical care.

If we know we are dying we must face it realistically. Would we deny a person who is terminally ill, the right to face death with dignity and if there is the loss of that dignity, bring forward death? A lot of pious, holier than thou thinking surrounds this subject. Take this statement for example⁴⁴,

"However, suicide is not what God wants for anyone. We have a God who loves us and cares for us and promises to meet all of our needs if we place our trust in Him *Pro 3:5* Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. Pro 3:6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

I ask these pious people who know so clearly "what God wants", "How many prayers of yours has God answered this week?" All, some or none? Tell me O pious ones, what is your prayer for the sick and suffering? That they just hang in because God might just answer their prayer, after they have suffered a bit more? So is it because perhaps, those believers who get sick and get no answer, or perhaps use the doctor and still get sick and die, do not trust enough, because that is the implication of the writer and it is no solution. God does not always provide solutions that we desire. When you start making statements on behalf of God that, "suicide is not what God wants for anyone", then you better have some evidence from God's word, otherwise shut up.

If God has given you no answer, then you make a decision based upon your store of knowledge and that is a personal decision. There is nowhere in the Scripture where suicide is condemned and there are no comments on those suicides as being sinful or morally reprehensible:

- Abimelech (Judges 9:54) to avoid the shame of death at the hands of a woman
- Samson (Judges 16:28-31) to defeat those who imprisoned him
- Saul (1Samuel 31:1-4) to avoid the dishonour of being captured after he was wounded
- Saul's armour-bearer (1Samuel 31:5) to atone for killing a king
- Ahithophel (2Samuel 17:23) in despair over deception being perpetrated around him
- Zimri (1Kings 16:18) to avoid capture by the army
- Judas Iscariot
- Jesus

Samson is aided by God for a kamikaze death upon the Philistines, when God gives His Spirit back to him. Ahithophel is condemned through the consequences of David's prayer, 2Sa_15:31 And one told David, saying, Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom. And David said, O LORD, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness. David effectively prays Ahithopel to death.

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⁴⁴ http://www.christiananswers.net/q-dml/suicide-and-heaven.html

Judas is condemned from before his own birth to this death by God. Jesus said, *Joh 10:18 No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.*

It is to be hoped that every soul facing difficulties, sickness and death would have the satisfaction of knowing in their own heart, what the Lord would have them to do. It is a matter between the individual and his Creator. I do not think that it is for others to knowingly override the person's decision, because it does not agree with their conscience. I think that it would be cruel to prolong pain and suffering simply because you could not come to terms with the fact that life will come to an end.

The time to prepare for death is long before it comes and as Christians we should make sure that we do not leave it to others to clear up our mess, because we could not look death in the face. Prepare to meet thy God O Israel.

24. The necessity of Pain

We have passed over the subject of death and we have examined how we, as Christians, should approach it. It was as we saw, one of the first consequences of sin. How that death was to be brought about is the subject that we now consider because it is relevant to our studies on "Jesus the Healer". What we have to do is to distinguish between what might be natural processes of human development and processes that are consequential to sin and the curse. What might be the part of the natural experience of being human and what might be something that is brought about as part of God's judgement upon our sinful nature. In order to illustrate this idea, we shall examine the subject of 'Pain'. Is it a consequence of the curse or was it part of our design?

As you read Genesis, you will find little reference to sickness. We read of dietary changes, *Gen 9:3 Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things*, and famines, *Gen 12:10 And there was a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was grievous in the land*. We see that the life expectancy decreases over time from around 900 years down to about 70 years. We shall in turn consider this remarkable change and how this might have been brought about. To put it in perspective, these ancient life spans would equate to a person of Adam's span, who could have watched the Battle of Hastings (1066) aged 30 years, the signing of the Magna Carta (1215), been at Agincourt (1415), witnessed the marriages of Henry VIII (1530's), waved farewell to the Pilgrim Fathers (1620), observing the Great Fire of London (1666), listened to John Wesley preach (1760's) and later on Charles Spurgeon (1870's), witnessed the events leading up to two world wars (1914 and 1939) and watched the 1966 World cup in his last year. That is some lifespan and something very dramatic must have occurred to curtail it.

Among the other discomforts of life, there is on occasion the inability to conceive, the menopause, death in childbirth, occasional famine but no mention of sickness or diseases. You may argue that it is not part of the narrative to make comments on this subject but since it makes comments on ageing, I can see no reason, if there were sicknesses, not to make a mention of them. Obviously, the lack of any remark does not mean that there was no sickness but the longevity would suggest that people remained relatively healthy into old age. What we can observe is that what in earlier times was 'youth', later on became 'getting on a bit', Gen 18:11 And Abraham and Sarah were aged, going on in

days. The custom as to women had ceased to be to Sarah. LITV. 100 years old in Adam's day was the bloom of youth but in Abraham's day it was the twilight years.

The first specific mention of sickness is at the end of Genesis. *Gen 48:1 And it came to pass after these things, that one told Joseph, Behold, thy father is sick:* and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. The word 'sick' however, can also mean physically weak, Jdg 16:7 And Samson said unto her, If they bind me with seven green withs that were never dried, then shall I be weak, and be as another man.

There are suggestions that sickness was not necessarily a permanent condition of life but was related to service. Exo 23:24 Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works: but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images. Exo 23:25 And ye shall serve the LORD your God, and he shall bless thy bread, and thy water; and I will take sickness (מחלה) away from the midst of thee. Exo 23:26 There shall nothing cast their young, nor be barren, in thy land: the number of thy days I will fulfil. Exo 23:27 I will send my fear before thee, and will destroy all the people to whom thou shalt come, and I will make all thine enemies turn their backs unto thee. Is the sickness mentioned here a reference to the "travail" of birth? Certainly in the context it talks about aborting young (cast their young) and barrenness, things associated with pregnancy.

The NT counterpart would be, 1Ti 2:14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. 1Ti 2:15 Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety. As we might expect, evolutionism has its own theory to explain what is happening⁴⁵:

Human childbirth is actually a good example of how evolution works - half-assed, kludgy solutions, struggling to force old features into new configurations. Malcolm Sergeant says that, "Death during childbirth occurs at a very low percentage so has very little impact on species survival." Not at all true - death during (human) childbirth is quite significant. Pre-modern medicine (and even before the ghastly attempts at medicine before the 20th century, which horribly increased death during childbirth) death during childbirth was quite common.

⁴⁵ https://www.quora.com/Why-hasnt-evolution-gradually-reduced-the-pain-and-mortality-during-human-childbirth

Alex Moore suggests that pain during childbirth might be preferred, but there is no evidence for this - since humans are virtually the only mammalian species to have such a painful childbirth, and yet other species (not just mammalian) show perfectly good bonding, this speculation really doesn't make much sense. No, painful and dangerous childbirth in humans is clearly a harmful side-effect of the large human brain. Smaller-brained species can much more safely, easily, and painlessly deliver babies.

So if it's harmful, why hasn't evolution eliminated it? Because evolution really doesn't work very well. It's all about tradeoffs and hacks and good-enough solutions. Here the tradeoff is between big brains and dangerous, painful childbirth. Big brains in humans have very obvious benefits, but also have equally obvious drawbacks --- not just in childbirth, but also in energy use, long childhoods and long pregnancies for brain development; the re-configuration of female pelvises to allow childbirth at all reduces locomotion somewhat; and so on.

Overall, natural selection has determined that this trade off is acceptable. The benefits of being smart outweigh the regular deaths of woman and infant, and all the other detriments.

So it is according to evolutionism⁴⁶, a problem of baby big heads and smaller pelvises (in another article⁴⁷ it suggested that, "The birth canal of that female Homo erectus is, in fact, 30 percent larger than that of the typical modern woman"). So according to them, blind evolution has conspired to make childbirth for humans more painful.

I use the evolutionist view to illustrate the stupidity of the people who hold this hypothesis. They infuse evolutionism with personality, "how evolution works, half-assed, kludgy solutions, struggling to force old features into new configurations" and "evolution really doesn't work very well. It's all about tradeoffs and hacks and good-enough solutions". Evolutionism does not provide answers, it just generates questions and particularly, questions about the sanity of its followers. The Bible suggests that the issues associated with childbirth have a moral origin and that it is a consequence of disobedience to the Creator. Associated with childbirth is pain and that pain is a reminder that every human is born in sin and under the curse of God.

Pain is a very individual experience; only the person feeling the pain can describe it properly. It is not well understood either in humans or animals and since it is complex and cannot be directly measured. For example two people may undergo the same unpleasant experience but each will have a different description of the pain. This makes it difficult to define and treat.

I have two questions to consider here.

- 1. Does God feel pain?
- 2. Was pain part of Jesus original design for man?

Does God feel pain? He most certainly does. Pain is not just a phenomenon of our earthly bodies, it is something that will affect spiritual entities as well. *Gen 6:6 And it repented the LORD that he had*

⁴⁶ I use the term evolutionism not evolution, because these people call our belief Creationism not Creation.

⁴⁷ See more at: http://www.livescience.com/7602-painful-labor-modern.html#sthash.SS6jD6dX.dpuf

made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. The word 'grieved' also means 'pained'. It is also true that God incarnate, Jesus, suffered agonies in the garden and pain on the cross. Pain in some sense is an emotional and physical response to something that is disagreeable. It is a signal that something is working against us and it causes us to cry out. Psa 22:1My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?

Hell has no meaning without the ability to suffer pain. Those fallen angels, although spirits will suffer pain. Rev 20:10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. Those who reject Christ will suffer pain as soon as they die. Luk 16:22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; Luk 16:23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. I had to point out to someone recently, that the person that they said was no longer suffering pain, was in the deepest pain possible. They just could not see beyond the lifeless corpse.

I cannot pass on here without an observation on our future state. Rev 21:4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. There will be no more pain. It will not be possible to feel hurt in our resurrected bodies. Those sensors in our present bodies which expose us to pain will no longer be required. We shall not be able to hurt ourselves, we will not be hurt and we will not hurt others. This heavenly society goes gently about its business, painlessly.

Was pain a part of Jesus original design or mankind? Of course it was since the whole nervous system and central processing was part of the original design. If Adam had walked into a tree, he would have felt it. If he stubbed his toe against a stone, he would have felt it. Pain helps us to understand the environment but it may not have been such a severe sensation before the fall. Adam may not have screamed in pain but perhaps more gently felt the blow. We see that God reduced the pain threshold after the fall, which multiplied its effect. We became more sensitive to pain. Gen 3:16 Unto the woman He said, 'Multiplying I multiply thy sorrow and thy conception, in sorrow dost thou bear children, YLT.

How does pain work? The spinal cord is the main route for all pain messages to the brain, where pain is then registered. Essentially there are two ways pain signals travel to the brain. The first is the fast way (motorway) the second the slow way (side roads). The former leads to sharp stabbing pain and the latter to a continuous dull and/or aching pain. Of course feelings of pain can be a mixture of these two. There are also two distinct types of pain. They are acute and chronic. What is the process⁴⁸?

 You prick your finger on something sharp. This causes tissue damage, which is registered by microscopic pain receptors (nociceptors) in your skin. Each pain receptor forms one end of a nerve cell (neurone). It is connected to the other end in the spinal cord by a long nerve fibre or axon. When the pain receptor is activated, it sends an electrical signal up the nerve fibre.

⁴⁸ http://www.mydr.com.au/pain/pain-and-how-you-sense-it

- 2. The nerve fibre is bundled with many others to form a peripheral nerve. The electrical signal passes up the neurone within the peripheral nerve to reach the spinal cord in the neck.
- 3. Within an area of the spinal cord called the dorsal horn, the electrical signals are transmitted from one neurone to another across junctions (synapses) by means of chemical messengers (neurotransmitters). Signals are then passed up the spinal cord to the brain.
- 4. In the brain, the signals pass to the thalamus. This is a sorting station that relays the signals on to different parts of the brain. Signals are sent to the somatosensory cortex (responsible for physical sensation), the frontal cortex (in charge of thinking), and the limbic system (linked to emotions).

The end result is that you feel a sensation of pain in your finger, think 'Ouch! What was that?' or something similar, and react emotionally to the pain; e.g. you feel annoyed or irritated.

The nervous system was part of our design, so what would life be like if we did not have pain? His work with leprosy patients in India and the United States convinced Dr. Paul Brand that pain truly is one of God's great gifts to us. Paul Brand was born in 1914 in India (Tamil Nadu) where his parents were missionaries and he himself was a committed Christian. He gives vivid descriptions of his time as a boy in India with regular bouts of dysentery and malaria living in the area known as "Kolli Malai". His father died in 1928 of blackwater fever⁴⁹.

In 1923 he was sent to the United Kingdom to further his education. He went on to study medicine and later gained his training as a surgeon, working in casualty surgery during the Second World War and the London Blitz. In 1946 he moved back to India and started the work for which he became well known. He visited a Leprosy Sanatorium at Chingleput and became interested in figuring out the reasons for the deformities that leprosy caused.

One of the main symptoms of leprosy is it damages the nerves, especially those on the skin's surface, that lead to a loss of sensation. In a simple sense, a leprosy sufferer becomes unable to sense physical pain. Dr Brand showed that deformities of the hands and feet that people experience are not because of the disease destroying the tissue. It is because the individuals are not aware that they may have burnt themselves, cut themselves or pulled something.

Dr Brand tells the story of watching a leprosy sufferer cooking food over a fire, when some of the food dropped into it. They tried a couple of times to save the food by getting it out with some sticks. When this did not work, they just put their hand directly in the flames and grabbed it. Their hand was of course badly burnt but they felt no pain.

Imagine you are standing having a conversation with a friend. While this conversation is going on, you naturally (and often unconsciously), shift your weight from side to side, to different parts of your feet and back and fourth. If you were to stand still without moving a muscle, within a very short space of time you start to notice pain. It's because keeping these muscles engaged for a long time

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⁴⁹ Blackwater fever is a complication of malaria in which red blood cells burst in the bloodstream (hemolysis), releasing hemoglobin directly into the blood vessels and into the urine, frequently leading to kidney failure

can be damaging, so you constantly make micro movements, engaging and disengaging different muscles, all with very little thought. It is the same thing when you walk (or run). When you walk, you don't hit the exact same spot on your foot with each stride. There are tiny little shifts so that different parts of your foot take the impact. You may strike with a similar location each time (with your heel or the front of the foot) but there will be subtle changes so that the burden is being shared. And the reason you know to make these changes (even if this "knowing" is at an unconscious level) is through pain.

Since someone with leprosy does not get this feedback they can stand in the exact same position for hours, never shifting their weight and giving those muscles a break. Or they can walk or run for 10km, never making small changes to their gait but instead hitting the exact same portion of their foot. And when this is kept up day after day, month after month, it leads to muscle atrophy, damage to the skin and tendons and structural problems. Dr Brand's careful observations led him to some solutions for this problem. He was able to reduce the levels of injury and I suppose it was a degree of healing. Here is what he did⁵⁰:

It took our staff years of dead-end research—and our patients years of misery before we fully comprehended a basic fact of human physiology: gentle stress repeatedly applied to the same spot can destroy living tissue. One clap of a hand does no damage; a thousand consecutive claps may cause pain and real damage. In walking, the mechanical force of the thousandth step is no greater than that of the first step, but by design foot tissue is vulnerable to the cumulative impact of force. The foot's main enemy turned out to be not thorns and nails, but the normal, everyday stresses of walking. Every healthy person knows something of this phenomenon. I buy a new pair of shoes, put them on, and start walking around the house and yard. For the first few hours they feel fine, but after a while the stiff leather begins to wear on my little toe and a rough edge grates against my heel. Instinctively I limp, shortening my stride and redistributing the stress to other parts of my foot. If I ignore the warning signals, a blister will pop up and I will experience acute pain. At that point, either I begin to limp more severely or, more likely, I remove the new shoes and put on some soft slippers for relief. On average it takes me about a week to break in new shoes, a process that involves adaptations in both the leather of the shoe and the leather of my foot. The shoe gets softer and more compliant to my foot's shape, while my foot grows extra layers of callus for protection at the stress points.

This entire process is foreign to a leprosy patient. Because he feels no pain from his little toe and heel, his stride never adjusts. After a blister rises, he still keeps walking, oblivious. The blister bursts, and an ulcer begins to form. Even so, he puts the shoes back on the next day, and the next, each time damaging more tissue. Infection may set in. If it goes untreated, that hot infection may spread into the bone, where it will not heal unless it gets complete rest. Studying a succession of X rays, we learned how pernicious a deep infection can be: tiny pieces of bone fragment break off and are extruded with the discharge from the wounds until eventually the infection leads to the loss of toes or even the entire foot. All this time, the leprosy patient may continue to

⁵⁰ The Gift of Pain: Why We Hurt & what We Can Do about it. By Philip Yancey, Paul W. Brand

walk on the injury site, showing not the slightest sign of a limp. We had solved the mystery of missing toes~—they are destroyed, little by little, because of infection—but how could we break the cycle? To combat the problem of repetitive stress on insensitive feet, we had to become shoe experts.

Starting from total ignorance, I tested hundreds of models, trying them out on a regular walking route from the hospital to the railway station. We needed a soft material that would adapt to the shape of a patient's foot and spread out stress over a large area, combined with a firm sole that would keep a patients foot from bending. We tried plaster casts, finely sanded wooden clogs, and plastic shoes formed from wax moulds. I travelled to Calcutta to learn how to mix polyvinyl chloride and to England to test spray—on plastics. Finally we came up with the right combination: a microcellular rubber platform, a firm "rocker" bar to guide the Walking motion, and a custom—fitted leather insole. Sadan was one of the first patients to get new shoes custom-shaped to his stubby feet.

You may not like it, but pain is a gift from God.

25. Fearfully wonderfully made

Psa 139:14 I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. Psa 139:15 My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. We are fearfully and wonderfully made and as we meditate on the marvel of our creation, we should consider whether some of the things that afflict us in life are for our benefit and part of a life process that does not require healing. In fact many things in life can be corrected by common sense and knowledge and it is to our shame that we understand so little about our own bodies and rely so much on others to maintain our health. It is probably true that people spend more time finding out the specification of a computer, a car or some electronic gadget than their own body. We leave it to others to keep us well.

I want to close the subject of 'pain' with a few more observations from Dr Brand's book on "The gift of pain". In these stories we see how individuals can be seriously damaged if they lack the ability to feel pain.

I asked the patients to join me in a detective hunt: together we would track down the cause of every single injury. We would meet as a group weekly, and each boy would have to accept responsibility for his injuries. Never could anyone say about a wound, "It just came by itself," or "That's what leprosy does." If I detected a new blister on the back of a knuckle or a spot of inflammation on the thumb, I wanted some explanation, no matter how far-fetched it sounded. Some of the boys hid their wounds at first. Years of rejection had conditioned them to conceal injuries, and they found it shameful to acknowledge their wounds so openly. In contrast, a few (the "naughty boys," as We called them) seemed to take morbid delight in their painlessness. These rapscallions liked to shock people. One boy pushed a thorn through the palm of the hand until it poked through the other side like a sewing needle.

Sometimes I felt like a schoolmaster, with the odd sense that I was introducing the boys to their own limbs, begging their minds to welcome the insensitive parts of their bodies. It was easy to think of the boys as being careless or irresponsible until I began to understand their point of view. Pain, along with its cousin touch, is distributed universally on the body, providing a sort of boundary of self. Loss of sensation destroys that boundary, and now my leprosy patients no longer felt their hands and feet as part of self. Even after surgery, they tended to view their repaired hands and feet as tools or artificial appendages. They lacked the basic instinct of self-protection that pain normally provides. One of the boys said to me, "My hands and feet don't feel part of me. They are like tools I can use. But they aren't really me. I can see them, but in my mind they are dead." I heard similar comments often, underscoring the crucial role pain plays in unifying the human body.

As weeks went by, the message finally sank in and the group joined together in the detective hunt. Whenever we spotted a wound we examined it carefully in search of a cause, then applied a splint to keep the finger or hand out of action until it had healed. We uncovered both everyday and exotic causes of spontaneous Wounds, feeling especially proud when we managed to solve a difficult case. For example, some of the boys had developed ugly sores between their fingers. We discovered that soap suds tend to get trapped in the crevices between partially paralyzed fingers and toes; the skin softens, macerates, and eventually cracks open. Once we had ferreted out the origin of an injury, we could usually prevent it from recurring.

It took us Weeks to decipher blisters that sometimes appeared on the knuckles of patients during the night. One boy seemed especially susceptible. At night we examined him and found healthy, unmarked hands; by the next morning, a tiny row of blisters had mysteriously appeared. How could injuries occur during sleep? Were they pressure sores? We quizzed him on his sleeping positions, and searched his room for any knobs or sharp objects. Finally, his keen-eyed roommates identified the problem. The boy with the blisters liked to read at night in bed. Just before retiring he would reach over and turn off the hurricane lamp by twisting a metal knob to withdraw the wick. As he did so, the back of his hand, insensitive to both heat and pain, rubbed against the glass globe, searing the flesh in a regular pattern along three fingers. We fitted large, long knobs on all hurricane lamps, and late night readers no longer had to worry about blisters.

The patients learned to account for 90 percent of spontaneous wounds. By far the most mystifying injuries involved the sudden disappearance of almost a whole segment of a finger or toe. Every once in a while a leprosy patient would show up at our daily meetings and sheepishly display a raw, bleeding patch, with the flesh around an inchlength section of a finger or big toe missing and hare bone exposed. This oddity defied everything we had learned and, until we solved the mystery, it put our entire theory in jeopardy. I dared not tell other hospital personnel about the problem, for it seemed to confirm the worst myths about leprous fingers and toes simply "falling off." Almost always, the afflicted person noticed the missing digit in the morning. Something ominous was taking place during the night.

A patient solved the mystery by sitting up all night in an observation post from which he watched a scene straight out of a horror movie. In the middle of the night a rat climbed onto the bed of a fellow patient, sniffed around tentatively, nuzzled a finger, and, meeting no resistance, began to gnaw on it. The lookout yelled, waking the whole room and scaring away the rat. At last we had the answer: the boys' fingers and toes had not dropped off—they were being eaten!

This most repugnant cause of spontaneous wounds had an easy remedy. First we set traps for the rodents and built barriers around the beds of our patients. When trouble continued, we settled on a more effective solution: we went into the cat breeding business, using the blood line of a proven Siamese male who was an excellent ratter. From then on, no leprosy patient could leave the rehabilitation centre without a feline companion. The problem of missing pieces of fingers vanished almost overnight.

Jesus heals a number of lepers during His ministry and perhaps the healing that we remember most is of the 10 lepers, only one of which returned to give thanks. Luk 17:13 And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. Luk 17:14 And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed ($\kappa\alpha\theta\alpha\rho$ iζ ω = kathariz \bar{o}). Luk 17:15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed (iάομ α i = iaomai), turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God.

You will have noticed that what happened to the lepers was first described as a 'cleansing' and then as a 'healing'. This draws our attention to a disease that excluded a person from 'clean' society. It had a ritual significance that typified sin in the individual. The particular sin was presumption and pride. When Miriam assumed that she could speak for the Lord she was struck with leprosy. Num 12:10 And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle; and, behold, Miriam became leprous, white as snow: and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, she was leprous. Num 12:11 And Aaron said unto Moses, Alas, my lord, I beseech thee, lay not the sin upon us, wherein we have done foolishly, and wherein we have sinned. The whiteness of the skin may typify a false righteousness?

The humiliation was not merely in the exclusion from society, it was in the fact that you had to go around telling people that you were unclean, so that they could avoid you. Lev 13:45 And the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean. As an antidote to self-righteousness, when you wake up in the morning, say before the Lord, "Unclean, unclean". Let us remind ourselves that we are lepers in the eyes of God and daily need cleaning to enter His presence. 1Jn 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 1Jn 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Like those lepers of old, we need "cleansing" each day.

These unfortunate souls must have been in anguish for their condition and this should remind us of the spiritual significance of the disease. We are all lepers in God's eyes until we stumble across Jesus and we all require to be made clean in the eyes of God. We must all appear before the priest Lev 14:2 This shall be the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing: He shall be brought unto the priest:

The leper's restoration was in two parts, the first sacrifices let him back in the camp, and was an initial 'cleansing' Lev 14:8 And he that is **to be cleansed** shall wash his clothes, and shave off all his

hair, and wash himself in water, that he may be clean: and after that he shall come into the camp, and shall tarry abroad out of his tent seven days. The second sacrifice on the 8th day brought him back into the presence of God, and he was deemed 'healed' Lev 14:10 And on the eighth day he shall take two he lambs without blemish, and one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish, and three tenth deals of fine flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, and one log of oil. Lev 14:11 And the priest that maketh him clean shall present the man that is to be made clean, and those things, before the LORD, at **the door of the tabernacle of the congregation**:

This final act was an atonement, Lev 14:29 And the rest of the oil that is in the priest's hand he shall put upon the head of him that is to be cleansed, to make an atonement for him before the LORD. I mention all of this because I want to illustrate the significance of leprosy to the people of God. It was not just that it was a debilitating disease that made life extremely difficult, it was a disease that separated you from God and required atonement. It is an object lesson to those that think that they can walk into the presence of God without any act of cleansing. They cannot and more than that, they are outside the community of God's people, that is, the Church. You cannot be a member of the body of Christ, neither can you be in communion with God, without being cleansed.

As for the physical healing that Jesus did, which was in a manner of speaking, the outward sign of an inward change, there would have been some dramatic readjustments. If the leprosy was as we have described it earlier, there would have been a necessity for the regrowth and reconnection of nerve fibres, the possible regrowth of damaged tissue and the ability to do all those tasks that had become difficult with the onset of the disease.

We have seen a reason for pain as it protects our bodies from serious injury. Yet it is perfectly possible that our Creator could have made the world without any sharp edges, with soft landings and with forgiving materials. Instead of us having to feel pain, the environment could have been designed not to hurt us. We could have lived lives that were pain free, drug free, injury free and far more comfortable. God however had prepared our bodies to feel the thorns and thistles of sin and that we would be made ready to experience the consequences of our sin in suffering.

Yet it goes far deeper than that. Imagine a world without pain but a world with sin. One day a man comes to redeem the chosen sinners. We stand by and watch as He is scourged and beaten. He feels nothing because He feels no pain. We watch and think that it is pointless because we too feel no pain like Him. Later He is taken to a hill where His persecutors nail Him to a cross. He feels no pain as He hangs there, He feels nothing as the spear pierces His side and as His blood trickles out, He passes, painlessly out of life and we, watching, look on mystified because we too feel no pain and so we have no understanding of suffering and find no meaning in His death.

How would we have understood the pain of Christ on the cross if it had not been for the fact that we too had suffered pain. The nails that pierced His hands would have no meaning to us without pain, because it would have been no different to a nail being banged into a piece of wood, without sense other than a sound. The crown of thorns, the curse of Adam on His head, would have had no meaning at all if He had not experienced the suffering of it. It would have been no different to putting a flower on His head. What singles out the real and deep meaning of pain is that Christ created it, to suffer it on our behalf and He gave it to us as a gift, so that we might empathize and appreciate the depth and the heights of His love for us, the Sinners of the world. Pain connects us with Jesus.

When we have pain, perhaps we Christians should view it not so much as a curse but as a blessing, for it brings me closer to understanding the suffering of Christ on my behalf. Now I can understand in part, "what pain he had to bear and we believe it was for us, He hung and suffered there". Pain is in a sense redemptive. It warns us of the dangers of life and the damage to our person. The pain of Christ does the same in the spirit. The leper cleansed was delivered back the gift of pain so that he might understand the suffering that made his deliverance possible.

Pain is just one function of the body's Nervous system of which the brain is the most complex part, in fact, the brain has been described as the most complex structure in the Universe. However the nervous system is just one of the 11 systems that work in harmony to maintain our life on Earth.

- 1. Skeletal System
- 2. Muscular System
- 3. Cardiovascular System
- 4. Digestive System
- 5. Endocrine System
- 6. Nervous System
- 7. Respiratory System
- 8. Immune / Lymphatic Systems
- 9. Urinary System
- 10. Female/male Reproductive System
- 11. Integumentary System (skin,hair,nails etc)

This complicated mechanism, our body, starts off as a single cell⁵¹ which explodes to produce 200 different types of cells:

Each human organism begins as a single cell—the fertilized egg, no bigger than the 'full stop' at the end of this sentence. It becomes two cells, then four, then eight, and so on up to 5 trillion cells. As cells grow and multiply, they take on special roles that fit into four broad categories. For example, some cells develop force and movement. These are muscle cells, able to adapt flexibly to stress. Cells called neurons generate electrical signals and carry messages between our brains and our bodies. Epithelial cells are found wherever the body has a covering or lining, for example, the skin, or the wall of the stomach. Other cells called connective-tissue cells connect, anchor, and support the structures of the body.

All of this cellular activity is directed by our genes, instructions we inherit from our parents for how our bodies look and everything that they do. Genes do this by coding for the manufacturing of proteins, which are molecules that serve as the building blocks of life. Proteins are so important that everything we can imagine doing—even imagining!—is the result of some 20,000 different kinds of proteins working together.

Cells not only specialize, they also begin to migrate throughout the developing body. Small communities of like cells begin to stick together and to make multicellular structures we call tissues. Different kinds of tissues assemble into organs, such as the

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⁵¹ http://www.humanilln<u>esses.com/original/A-As/The-Human-Body-Systems-Working-Together.html</u>

heart, liver, and brain. An organ is a part of a living thing that performs specific tasks. For example, the heart pumps blood, the liver (which has more than 500 functions⁵²) helps get rid of bodily poisons and stores vitamins, and the brain interprets electrical signals and makes decisions about what to do.

Different organs functioning together are termed systems (or sometimes, organ systems). For example, the respiratory system consists of the nose, pharynx, larynx, trachea, bronchi, and lungs. The parts of the respiratory system work together to take in the oxygen we need to survive, and to get rid of carbon dioxide (waste gas). The circulatory system consists of the heart, blood vessels, and blood. Its purpose is to transport blood containing oxygen and nutrients throughout the body's tissues. Because all of our organs require oxygen to function, the respiratory system depends on the circulatory system to transport the oxygen we breathe to all parts of our body.

With such complicated systems working in a complex harmony it surprises me that there are not many more occasions when we get a system failure, for that is generally an indicator of disease. To say that we are fearfully and wonderfully made seems to me a terrible understatement of the case. We are a precision machine designed by our Creator Jesus and it is a great shame that men are so wilfully blind to this and believe it could just happen by chance.

This level of complexity is also an object lesson about the Church of Christ. It is a system and should function as a system with well defined organs all contributing to the overall well being. 1Co 12:14 For the body is not one member, but many. 1Co 12:15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 1Co 12:16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 1Co 12:17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? 1Co 12:18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. 1Co 12:19 And if they were all one member, where were the body? 1Co 12:20 But now are they many members, yet but one body.

What would you feel like if you woke up one morning and found your leg gangrenous, that you were blind in one eye, deaf, chest pains and both arms paralysed? Worried or panicked? Would you cry for help or just lie there moaning? Would you desperately want healing or be unconcerned? I imagine most people would want the emergency services immediately. However, when it comes to the Church which is little different to that failing body that I have just described, no one is really bothered. In fact, in most cases, the church as a body is a mouth attached to a corpse. A speaker and a group passive participants, a pastor and a congregation. It is in desperate need of healing.

You may think that it is wrong to speak of the church like that but Jesus description is equally unflattering and that was 2000 years ago. He called the Jews 'whitewashed sepulchres', *Mat 23:27 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Mat 23:28 Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.* Painted corpses like those remains you see in catacombs. Bones covered in rags. Jesus called the Laodicean church miserable blindmen, *Rev 3:17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with*

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⁵² http://www.healingedge.net/store/article_liver_functions.html

goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: Stripped of all dignity, groping in the dark.

If churches declined that rapidly, within the space of 50 years after Jesus, then see how much more they have fallen by today. What would He call our church and the other churches of our day? It is a 'reverend' or pastor speaking to a bunch of people who exercise no contribution to the body. Their prayers, their hymns are all chosen for them by the mouthpiece and woe betide the Lord is He does not let them out on the dot of 12.00 because the service always finishes then. If the Lord is not finished the people certainly are. Service? No, it is ritual.

And when you look at what people pass off as organs of an organic church, you will find that they are prosthetics, artificial limbs performing activities that Christian's think are God given. Messy church, food banks, discussion groups all pass off as Christianity when in fact they are misguided, ungifted attempts at religion.

Churches need to take a health check and revisit their Creator.

26. God's smallest evangelists

We opened up the subject of our body and its complex systems which I encourage you to examine in more detail. In a recent paper titled "Dissecting Darwinism," Baylor University Medical Centre surgeon Joseph Kuhn described serious problems with Darwinian evolution⁵³.

Kuhn cited the work of another medical doctor, Geoffrey Simmons, who described "all or nothing" human body systems. These combine with many others to form the entire human body—a system of systems—that is irreducible at many levels, from gross anatomy to biochemistry. For example, just as a woman would die without her heart, she would also die without the vital blood biochemical haemoglobin.

But even an intact heart and haemoglobin need regulation. A heart that beats too fast or too slow can be just as lethal as having no heart, and a body that produces too much or too little haemoglobin can be equally unhealthy. Thus, the systems that regulate heartbeats and haemoglobin must also have been present from the beginning.

Kuhn wrote that "virtually every aspect of human physiology has regulatory elements, feedback loops, and developmental components that require thousands of interacting genes leading to specified protein expression." Thus, "the human body represents an irreducibly complex system on a cellular and an organ/system basis."

Evolution has no proven explanations for the origin of just one irreducibly complex system, let alone the interdependent web of irreducible systems that comprise the human body.

Could the human body have evolved? According to Kuhn, to change another creature into a human "would require far more than could be expected from random mutation and natural selection." However, a wonderfully constructed human body is exactly what

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⁵³ http://www.icr.org/article/surgeon-says-human-body-did-not-evolve/

an all-wise Creator would make, and He promised that those who trust in Him will one day inherit new bodies, "that fadeth not away."

Of course, as I have suggested, it is not just the wonder of the systems. It is the wonder how it all became encoded into the DNA together with the miniature processors that read and assemble the DNA code. Darwinism does not explain this. We also do not exist in isolation from a larger system. There is a bio-system that supports our existence, because we could not live if it were not for these wonders of Creation. Among them are bacteria. Bacteria are so called because they resemble 'rods' or 'staffs' and the Greek for 'staff' is 'bacteria'. The reader of the Greek OT (LXX) would have read that His 'rod and bacteria' would have comforted him. These tiny organisms are some of the greatest servants that the Creator produced and it is worth examining how they can work both for us and against us.

Our bodies were designed to resist invasion by pathogens⁵⁴. This tells us two things. Firstly the Creator had created pathogens and secondly, He had prepared defences against them. Among the pathogens are bacterium (rod like cells). Bacteria are a group of microscopic organisms that are capable of reproducing on their own, causing human disease by direct invasion of body tissues. Bacteria often produce toxins that poison the cells that they have invaded. This article⁵⁵ shows the important role bacteria play in our lives:

The idea that trillions of bacteria are swarming over your skin and through your body is enough to give anyone the creepy crawlies. But as long as humans can not live without carbon, nitrogen, protection from disease and the ability to fully digest their food, they can't live without bacteria, said Anne Maczulak, a microbiologist and author of the book "Allies and Enemies: How the World Depends on Bacteria" (FT Press, 2010).

In soil and in the ocean, bacteria are major players in the decomposition of organic matter and the cycling of chemical elements such as carbon and nitrogen, which are necessary for human life. Because plants and animals can not create some of the nitrogen molecules we need to live, soil bacteria and cyanobacteria (blue-green algae) play an absolutely indispensable role in turning atmospheric nitrogen into ammonium or nitrates, the forms of nitrogen that plants can absorb to create amino acids and nucleic acids, the building blocks of DNA. We eat the plants and reap the benefits.

Bacteria also play a role cycling another important substance for human life, water. In recent years, scientists from Louisiana State University have found evidence that bacteria represent many, if not most, of the tiny particles that cause clouds to precipitate into falling snow and rain.

On and inside the human body, bacteria offer still other benefits. In the digestive system, they help us break down food, like plant fibres, that we're not so good a handling ourselves. "We get more nutrition out of our food because of bacteria". Bacteria in the digestive system also supply us with needed vitamins like biotin and vitamin K, and are our primary source for some of these nutrients. Experiments done on

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⁵⁴ A pathogen is anything that causes a disease.

http://www.livescience.com/32761-good-bacteria-boost-immune-system.html

guinea pigs have shown that animals raised in a sterile environment without any bacteria are malnourished and die young.

Outside the body, the forest of bacteria on the skin (almost 200 separate species on a normal person, according to researchers at New York University) dominates the environment of the skin and its resources, keeping other bacteria from being able to establish a foothold. And in or out, exposure to bacteria has been shown to be an important part of the development of our immune systems. Exposure to bacteria, both benign and harmful, is what primes the immune system to respond to pathogenic invaders later in life, according to Gerald Callahan, a microbiologist at Colorado State University. Research published in the New England Journal of Medicine has also shown that children who are sheltered from bacteria have a higher chance of developing asthma and allergies.

This is not to say beneficial bacteria can not also be dangerous. Usually, helpful bacteria and harmful bacteria are mutually exclusive. But there is overlap, notably in the bacteria that inhabit the body. "Staph bacteria is a good example because it's all over our skin". A colony of Staphylococcus aureus living on the arm might be plugging along, crowding out intruders without harming the body, but if you get a cut or your immune system is compromised, those bacteria can run amok causing an infection.

The number of bacterial cells in the body is commonly estimated at 10 times the number of human cells. "That's caused a lot of scientists to describe us as more bacteria than human". It's a little creepy, "but it helps you visualize how large a role these organisms play."

Without these wonderful creations, the world would be metres deep in effluent, and it shows that the whole biosphere in which we live was designed to take care of itself by these tiny servants of God. How ungrateful are we then, who spend millions of pounds trying to wash them off of our bodies and poison with chemicals, those creations that God gave us, just to make us appear cleaner than we are. In an article entitled "The Good, the Bad and the Acne", Dr Elizabeth Grice explains 16:

The bacterium that causes acne protects our skin by crowding out other, more dangerous bacteria. When you use antibacterial hand soap or take antibiotics, it's easy to think of bacteria as bad guys. After all, Salmonella and E. coli can give you food poisoning, and Staphylococcus aureus (S. aureus) can cause pneumonia, meningitis or serious wound infections. But bacteria are not all bad. Many are harmless, and some are actually very helpful. On the skin, Staphylococcus epidermidis protects us by taking up space that the harmful Staphylococcus-Aureus would otherwise colonize.

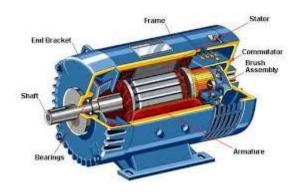
The common skin bacterium that causes acne works the same way. "It is occupying a niche so that other, more potentially harmful bacteria don't invade," Grice explains. It might sound unhealthy or even dangerous to have skin that's teeming with bacterial colonies. But as Grice points out, it's completely ordinary.

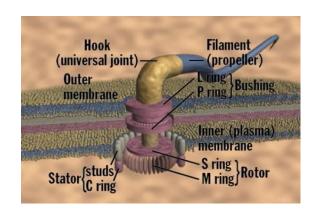
⁵⁶ https://publications.nigms.nih.gov/findings/jan12/body-bacteria.asp

Your skin was sterile only once in your life—when you were in the womb. Minutes after you were born, bacteria began to colonize it. Your body relies on some of these bacteria as part of its first line of defence. Many bacteria on the skin defend themselves by secreting antimicrobial peptides, or small proteins that kill harmful invaders. In protecting themselves, they also protect us.

We might consider God's Word similar to some of those bacteria. It provides a protective covering for our lives. How ready though are we to wash it off at the first opportunity so that we can revert to smelling like the rest of the world, bearing a different fragrance? We might also learn that God is truly in the detail and would have us pay attention to detail. If He creates these tiniest of servants to do His bidding, it becomes His greater creation to do likewise. He will not hold us guiltless for our neglect of detail, Mat 5:18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Mat 5:19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

As an aside, one of the wonders of these tiny pathogens is their ability to move. Molecular motors, machines made of protein on the submicroscopic scale, are clear evidence of creative design (Romans 1:20). However, scientists who approach the data from an evolutionary perspective are quick to counter such design in the evidence. They insist that blind chance, mutations, and natural selection are all that is necessary to make a constant-torque, liquid-cooled, proton-motive force-powered rotating motor such as the tiny bacterial flagellum⁵⁷. God is most certainly in the detail.





Life stands on a knife edge because there are pathogens which will kill us given the chance. To counter the effects of pathogens we have an immune system. The immune system is ingenious⁵⁸.

In today's world (post-Fall), it has three lines of defense and more (Table 1). The first line of defence includes your skin, the mucous membranes and secretions, and the normal microbiome⁵⁹. The second line of defence includes white blood cells, inflammation, and

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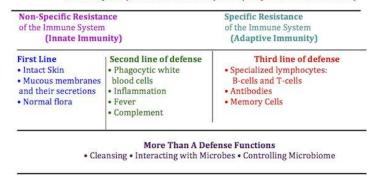
https://www.joutube.com/watch?v=a 5FToP mMY https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a 5FToP mMY

⁵⁸ https://answersingenesis.org/human-body/our-impressive-immune-system-more-than-a-defense/

The microorganisms in a particular environment (including the body or a part of the body). "we depend on a vast army of microbes to stay alive: a microbiome that protects us against germs, breaks down food to release energy, and produces vitamins

body temperature. Our third line of defence is comprised of antibodies, specialized lymphocytes such as B-cells and T-cells, along with memory cells. But, the immune systems functions go beyond simply defence. Two other functions are cleansing and regulating. The immune system cleanses our body from waste build up and potential harm. The spleen, from the beginning,

Table 1. Summary of the Immune System: More Than A Defense The Multiple Layers of the Immune System (Adapted from Gillen, 2007)



Many, O Lord my God, are Your wonderful works Which You have done; And Your thoughts toward us cannot be recounted to You in order; If I would declare and speak of them,

They are more than can be numbered." Ps. 40: 5 NKJV

was designed to cleanse and filter the blood from aged and dying cells along with bacteria. The spleen maintains blood volume, blood cells, and reusable material from aged blood cells.

Normal microbiota has a symbiotic relationship with our bodies. The sheep dog analogy was used to describe the interaction between our body and the normal microbiome to defend against pathogens. The dogs herd and direct the sheep to stay "in-line." If a threatening animal comes along, however, they still have the capability to defend and protect the sheep.

Immunity includes specificity, versatility, memory, tolerance, and cell and tissue specific responses. The immune system is adaptive: it learns, has memory, and is specific. The overall complexity of the human body and the interwoven magnificence of our immune system further illustrate evidence of an intelligent design by a master craftsman. It is more than a defence. It is "fearfully and wonderfully made".

The immune system serves more than just to "defend" against disease. The immune system was designed to interact with microbes and cleanse the body of aged, dying, dead red blood cells and bacteria, even in the Pre-Fall World. There are toll-like receptors in the immune system that have "sensory" function, as well as defence functions in animals and humans.

The term "cytokine" is derived from a combination of two Greek words, "cyto" meaning cell and "kinos" meaning movement. Cytokines are cell signalling molecules that aid cell to cell communication in immune responses and stimulate the movement of cells towards sites of inflammation, infection and trauma. Examples of cytokines include the agents interleukin and the interferon which are involved in regulating the immune system's response to inflammation and infection.

In the 1990's several research studies showed a direct link between mental state and disease. Some demonstrated a correlation between level of psychological stress and susceptibility to infection by a common cold virus. There is a growing interest in the field of psychoneurimmunolgy (PNI), research on the physiology of stress. The growing body of evidence is that stress can affect our immune response and make us vulnerable to disease. Lifestyles choices, diet, exercise and many other factors will affect our ability to cope with disease in a fallen world. Pharaoh suffered the stress of his

intransigence. Exo 9:14 For I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people; that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth.

The fine balance in man at his creation has been disturbed by sin and on top of that, man has to contend with the judgements of God. As Christians, we are told that plagues will come upon mankind (Revelation) but not every plague comes with a label explaining why God has laid it upon mankind. Not every sickness comes with a written warning from the Creator, although there may be spiritual causes. In fact, I know few Christians who would ever look for a spiritual cause for a physical ailment. Most are too righteous to expect that God would inflict that upon them, forgetting that they still have a lot of sin in their lives. Disease may be the cattle prod to get us out of our false comfort zones. In fact it should draw us into deeper dependence upon our Creator.

So what have all of these pathogens got to do with "Jesus the Healer"? They were part of His original Creation, part of our being and regulated by His power. Boils, for example, were part of the judgements of God upon Egypt, Exo 9:10 And they took ashes of the furnace, and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses sprinkled it up toward heaven; and it became a boil breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beast. Exo 9:11 And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils; for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians. Usually, the cause is bacteria such as staphylococci that are present on the skin. Bacterial colonisation begins in the hair follicles and can cause local infection and inflammation. God used bacteria to punish Egypt, bring Hezekiah to his senses and satan used boils to test Job. Again, we are brought to see that there may be a satanic origin of our disease, even though it was by Divine permission.

Death by disease was a choice for the Egyptians in Moses' day as it was for the Israelites. You could obey and live or disobey and suffer. It is a parting shot to the Church at the very end of the Bible, that if we who call ourselves believers, tamper with the Word of God, we shall suffer God's plagues. Rev 22:18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: Rev 22:19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

This is the judgement of Christ upon those who call Him "Lord, Lord" and do not do the things that He asks. This is the judgement of Christ upon all those who think that He is such a loving God, that they can believe what they want, do what they want, behave like they want and still be given an entrance into the "Holy city". Read that text again (Mat 7:22), it is not possible.

Disease should be a constant reminder and warning to us that we live a fragile existence and that the manner of that existence will affect our health now and most certainly in the everlasting. Wherever we see disease breaking out, epidemics and pandemics it should remind us straightway that this is a fallen world and we suffer because of that. Observing the 'Black death' in 1665, Thomas Vincent noted:

Now secure sinners begin to be startled, and those who would have slept at quiet still in their nests, are unwillingly awakened. Now a great consternation seizeth upon most persons, and fearful bodings of a desolating judgement. Now guilty sinners begin to look about them, and think with themselves into what corner of the Land they might fly to

hide them. Now the prophane and sensual, if they have not remorse for their sins, yet dread and terrours, the effect of guilt, they could not drive from them; and if by company, and carousing, and soft pleasures, they do intoxicate and smoothen their spirits in the day; yet we may guess what dread doth return upon them, if they give but any room for retirement, and what hideous thoughts such persons have in the silent night, through fears of death which they are in danger of. Now those who did not believe an unseen God, are afraid of unseen arrows; and those which slighted Gods threatnings of eternal judgements, do tremble at the beginning of His execution of one, and not the greatest temporal judgement. Now those which had as it were challenged the God of Heaven, and defied Him by their horrid Oathes and Blasphemies, when He begins to appear, they retreat, yea fly away with terrour and amazement.

Such plagues may shepherd men towards the kingdom. We might even go so far as to suggest that these bacteria are the Creator's smallest evangelists. They bring with them the wonder of His design, the terror of judgement and a call to consider their Maker.

Just as the body has its various levels of defence and immunity, the Christian is given his protection, the Christian armour. This is perhaps the spiritual lesson from this chapter. Is our spiritual immune system working or are we plagued by the fiery darts of the evil one? That is a choice which is clearly down to us.

27. Genetic entropy, evolution's curse

In a small laboratory in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1965, a curious young biologist conducted an experiment that would revolutionize the way we think about aging and death. The scientist who conducted that experiment, Dr. Leonard Hayflick, would later lend his name to the phenomenon he discovered, **the Hayflick limit**⁶⁰.

Dr. Hayflick noticed that cells grown in cultures reproduce by dividing. They produce facsimiles of themselves (by a process known as mitosis) a finite number of times before the process stops for good and the cell dies. In addition, cells frozen during their lifetimes and later returned to an active state had a kind of cellular memory: The frozen cells picked up right where they left off. In other words, interrupting the cells' life span did nothing to lengthen it.

Hayflick found that cells go through three phases. The first is rapid, healthy cell division. In the second phase, mitosis slows. In the third stage, senescence, cells stop dividing entirely. They remain alive for a time after they stop dividing, but sometime after cellular division ends, cells do a particularly disturbing thing, essentially, they commit suicide. Once a cell reaches the end of its life span, it undergoes a programmed cellular death called apoptosis.

When a new cell is born from an older one through cell division, it begins its own life span. This span appears to be governed by DNA, located in the nucleus of a cell. A

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⁶⁰ http://science.howstuffworks.com/life/genetic/hayflick-limit.htm

student of Hayflick's later found that when he removed the nucleus of an old cell and replaced it with the nucleus of a young cell, the old cell took on a new life. The old cell's life span took on that of a young cell. Like any other cell (except for stem cells), it divided most rapidly early in its lifetime, eventually slowing cellular division as it aged, before stopping altogether and undergoing apoptosis.

The implications of the Hayflick limit are staggering: Organisms have a molecular clock that's inexorably winding down from the moment we're born.

When all of the cells created in the human body before birth (and all of the cells these cells produce) are multiplied by the average time it takes for cells to reach the end of their lives, you get roughly 120 years. This is the ultimate Hayflick limit -- the maximum number of years that a human can possibly live.

Many cells must purposefully sacrifice themselves for the good of the whole body, a marvellous testimony to the Creator's hand. For example, some serve as scaffolds, supporting the emergence of more permanent and specialized cells. In the wake of each new organ is a fast-disappearing trail of cells, cells that must "die" by design. This process is appropriately termed programmed cell death (PCD).

The clean-up and removal of the scaffolds is far from a random process. Thus a grand orchestration of cell death sculpts organs and organ systems and as the baby grows to maturity, trillions of cells are lost, eliminated by this precisely controlled process. Amazingly, the immune system remains silent while the body gradually loses several persons worth of cells!

In an adult, when any one of these trillions of cells turns rogue, the self-destruct button in that cell is frantically triggered (the programmed cell death tool kit is present in all cells with nuclei). When the self-destruct machinery fails, just one rogue cell can, as a spreading cancer, threaten the life of the whole organism.

There is a phrase that I dislike, "the devil is in the detail". When people say that the devil in the detail, they mean that small things in plans and schemes, that are often overlooked, can cause serious problems later on. I prefer to see "The Creator in the detail". In this microscopic world of life, unknown to past generations until the discovery of the microscope, we see details of life that reveal Christ's care for us. In this unseen world, God's helpers make our lives liveable. We can see the intricate details of life laid bare, as the Creator designs the platform upon which He will stand the pinnacle of His Creation, Man. Hayflick's discovery suggests that the original human genome has undergone a dramatic transformation since the Creation. Just what may have caused that transformation? Evolutionists would say mutations and selection always working to improve the species. Is that so? I have argued that mutations add nothing constructive or beneficial to the human genome. Mutations place the organism in extreme danger of degenerating and dying.

Darwin's 'natural selection' is in reality the removal by death, of life forms that cannot survive. Darwinism is in fact the 'survival of the survivors', because there is no one on the production line sorting out the bad and broken eggs. Even in healthy 'fit' populations, disease and disaster can wipe us out in an instant, so being 'fit' is just one condition of existence. However, mutations do not

automatically get removed from populations. They can accumulate with disastrous effect. Let me introduce you to Dr John Sandford⁶¹. Here is one of his findings on evolutionism:

During the last century, there was a great deal of effort invested in trying to use mutation to generate useful variation. This was especially true in my own area – plant breeding. When it was discovered that certain forms of radiation and certain chemicals were powerful mutagenic agents, millions and million of plants were mutagenized and screened for possible improvements. Assuming the Primary Axiom (that the species are merely the product of random mutations plus natural selection), it would seem obvious that this would result in rapid "evolution" of our crops. For several decades this was the main thrust of crop improvement research. Vast numbers of mutants were produced and screened, collectively representing many billions of mutation events. A huge number of small, sterile, sick, deformed, aberrant plants were produced. However, from all this effort, essentially no meaningful crop improvement resulted. The entire effort was a failure, and was eventually abandoned.

Remember this piece of work by John Sandford because it is evidence that mutations do not improve the quality of the crops and that they do not improve the quality of man. It is far more likely that man will turn into an ape than an ape turn into a man. Also observe that it was not 'blind' natural selection at work. Intelligent minds sorted through the plant mutations and found nothing beneficial.

Perhaps John's greatest work is on the subject of Genetic Entropy (GE). Let me first explain what 'entropy' is. Entropy, is a measure of the "disorder" or uncertainty of a system. It is normally used to explain a measure of the unavailable energy in a closed thermodynamic system that is also usually considered to be a measure of the system's disorder, that is a property of the system's state. We might say that as things fall apart and get more and more disordered, like a body in decay, the entropy increases. Order out of disorder, the reverse process, requires a decrease in entropy. Your aging car or your aging body are seeing an increase in disorder and entropy.

The thesis of John's book (Genetic Entropy & The Mystery of the Genome⁶²) is that there is a systematic breakdown of the internal biological information systems that make life alive. Genetic entropy results from genetic mutations, which are typographical errors in the programming of life (life's instruction manuals). Mutations systematically erode the information that encodes life's many essential functions. Biological information consists of a large set of specifications, and random mutations systematically scramble these specifications, gradually but relentlessly destroying the programming instructions essential to life. Eventually the book of life will have so many mistakes it will be unreadable.

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⁶¹ John Sanford graduated in 1976 from the University of Minnesota with a BSc in horticulture. He went to the University of Wisconsin–Madison where he received an MSc in 1978 and a PhD in 1980 in plant breeding/plant genetics. Between 1980 and 1986 Sanford was an assistant professor of Horticultural Sciences at Cornell University, and from 1986 to 1998 he was an associate professor of Horticultural Science. Although retiring in 1998, Sanford continues at Cornell as a courtesy associate professor. He held an honorary Adjunct Associate Professor of Botany at Duke University. He has published over 70 scientific publications.

Discussion on genetic entropy https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jLG7hMJK1UU Discussion on genetic entropy https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eY98io7JH-c

Hayflick demonstrated that a population of normal human foetal cells in a cell culture will divide between 40 to 60 times. The population will then enter a senescence phase. Each mitosis (division) slightly shortens each of the telomeres on the DNA of the cells. Telomeres are like the end caps on shoe laces that stop them falling apart. Eventually there is nothing to stop the 'falling apart'. Telomere shortening in humans eventually makes cell division impossible, and this aging of the cell population appears to correlate with the overall physical aging of the human body. This mechanism also appears to prevent genomic instability. Telomere shortening may also prevent the development of cancer in human aged cells by limiting the number of cell divisions. However, shortening of telomeres impairs immune function and thus might also increase susceptibility to cancer.

Genetic Entropy is most easily understood on a personal level. In our bodies there are roughly 3 new mutations (word-processing errors), every cell division. Our cells become more mutant, and more divergent from each other every day. By the time we are old, each of our cells has accumulated tens of thousands of mutations. Mutation accumulation is the primary reason we grow old and die. This level of genetic entropy is easy to understand.

There is another level of genetic entropy that affects us as a population. Because mutations arise in all of our cells, including our reproductive cells, we pass many of our new mutations to our children. So mutations continuously accumulate in the population, with each generation being more mutant than the last. So not only do we undergo genetic degeneration personally, we also are undergoing genetic degeneration as a population. This is essentially evolution going the wrong way, it is devolution. Natural selection can slow down, but cannot stop Genetic Entropy on the population level.

Apart from intelligent input, information and information systems always degenerate. This is obviously true in the human realm, but is equally true in the biological realm (contrary to what evolutionists claim). The more technical definition of entropy, as used by engineers and physicists, is simply a measure of disorder. Technically, apart from any external intervention, all functional systems degenerate, consistently moving from order to disorder (because entropy always increases in any closed system). Moth and rust, decay and disorder is a law built into our lives. For the biologist it is more useful to employ the more general use of the word entropy, which conveys that since physical entropy is ever-increasing (disorder is always increasing), therefore there is universal tendency for all biological information systems to degenerate over time, apart from intelligent intervention.

Entropy is an element of this temporal creation. Entropy does not apply to the Creator or His eternal Kingdom. Mat 6:19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: Mat 6:20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: Heaven is not subject to decay. I think that this idea is conveyed in the words of Isaiah when he describes God's kingdom at the end of his prophecy. Isa 65:20 There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. Age loses its meaning in the hereafter, as Laurence Binyon's poem, "For the Fallen" says, "They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old: Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn". Time as we know it will cease to exist and with time, entropy.

John Sanford points to the accumulation of deleterious mutations and argues that our genomes are not evolving to something greater; we are decaying and degenerating. In other words, our genomes at one point were in far better shape than they are at present. The decay process has taken a huge toll. He suggests that this decay trend is not only real, but it is an inevitable result of the random, natural accumulation of mutations in our genome. Thus, not only do mutations lead to decay, they do not lead to any meaningful increase in information, which is absolutely required by **the Primary Axiom**⁶³. In order for organisms to evolve from one form to another, new genetic information is needed in order to provide "instructions" for building the proteins and other features of the organism. Sanford clearly establishes that any expectation of getting new, useful information from these random processes is a completely blind trust in an impotent process.

When we view the genome as an instruction manual, it is not hard to imagine how instructions in that manual may change simply by randomly changing letters in the manual. These changes are analogous to the random changes in our genome that are referred to as mutations. Mutations can be as simple as a single "letter" (i.e., a nucleotide) being changed or as major as the loss or duplication of an entire "book" (i.e., a chromosome). Our genome includes six billion "letters" split into 46 "volumes" (in a typical body cell; 23 chromosomes in reproductive cells). It is clear, though, that randomly changing letters in an instruction manual would not provide new and useful information.

DNA undergoes up to a million damage and repair events per cell per day, yet despite this built in error correction, every one of us already carries tens of thousands of harmful mutations, and each of us will pass on approximately 100 new mutations to future generations. Humanity is degenerating at an accelerating pace, and at some point the number of mutations will become so great that we will no longer be able to produce viable offspring. This is not going to happen in the immediate future, but already signs of DNA degeneration are all around us. Despite all of our advanced technology, genetically-related diseases are absolutely exploding. Our bodies are weak and frail, and with each passing generation it is getting even worse.

Dr Sanford cites research showing that the human race is currently degenerating at 1-2 % per generation due to accumulation of mutations. At a 1% decline in fitness per generation, there is a sharp reduction in fitness after 300 generations (about 6,000 years)." Hopefully, the Lord will come before that.

There are more than 6,000 known single-gene (or monogenic) disorders⁶⁴, which occur in about 1 out of every 200 births. As their name suggests, these diseases are caused by a mutation in one gene. The dystrophin gene is the largest gene found in nature, measuring 2.4 Mbases. A single error in a string of 2.4million bases brings a crippling disease.

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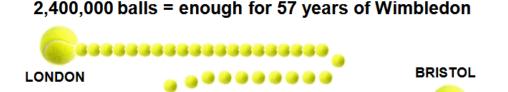
⁶³ Modern Darwinism is built on what I (J Sanford)will be calling "The Primary Axiom". The Primary Axiom is that man is merely the product of random mutations plus natural selection.

⁶⁴ https://www.genecards.org/cgi-bin/listdiseasecards.pl

In the absence of functional dystrophin, normal muscle contractions cause injury to the sarcolemmal membrane. In response to repeated membrane damage, the regenerative capacity of the muscle is overwhelmed, and the tissue is replaced by adipose and fibrous material.

As of 2007, <u>dystrophin</u> is the longest gene known, covering 2.4 <u>megabases</u> (0.08% of the human genome) at locus Xp21.

The primary transcript (2,400,000 bases) takes 16 hours to transcribe, the mature mRNA measures 14000 bases. The 79 exons code for a protein of over 3500 amino acid residues



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By contrast, polygenic disorders are caused by several genes, frequently in combination with environmental factors. Examples of genetic phenotypes include Alzheimer's disease, breast cancer, leukaemia, heart defects, and deafness. I have only seen a few spurious mutations that are said to impose a benefit to mankind. On balance the deterioration argument wins numerically. Our present Normal" is very different to what was the Created "Normal".

What then could have caused these terrible disorders that cause so much human misery and why does God bring these things to pass in our lives?

28. Fall and decline

We could spend a lot of time on the subject of nature's fall and decline, however there are many Christian sources (ICR, Creation science, Creation.com etc) that I recommend you study for yourself. There is no conflict between the Biblical faith and science, for the Creator designated the 'laws' which fix science and it is further clear that those laws, especially 'sin and death', have a religious origin. I have a few further thoughts before we move on from here.

The healings of Christ were not a poor attempt to save man from his inevitable decline. It was not a lucky moment in history when a few people got a reprieve from sickness. It remains and is a statement that Christ is the Lord of all sickness. *Exo 4:11 And Jehovah said to him, Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes the dumb, or the deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Is it not I, Jehovah?* LITV. Jesus is Jehovah and that is what the Jews and many Christians today fail to see. Jesus or Joshua means 'Jehovah Saved'. The healings of Jesus are the calling cards of Jehovah not a "get out of sickness free" card. Our problem is that we expect the focus of healing to be ourselves and not Jesus Christ.

The laws of Thermodynamics are hard at work unravelling the order of this Creation and especially is can be seen in the increase in errors in our Genome with its resultant diseases and infirmities. This

raises and interesting question, "if GE is present in all creation, why do species, like bacterium, that multiply rapidly, still exist⁶⁵? Here is an explanation:

Bacteria have extremely short generation times. Some bacteria can reproduce every 20 minutes, so would be gaining far more mutations in a day than humans would in a hundred years. Since bacteria are much simpler organisms, it should take less time to break down their genetic instruction set compared to humans. Why, then, did they not go extinct long ago?

The genome of the bacterium E. coli, for example, is about 1,000 times smaller than that of humans; bacteria are more specialized and perform fewer functions. Any letter change is more likely to do something that natural selection can 'see'. That is, it is more likely that a small change will produce a large enough effect that it will make a difference in the number of individuals carrying that trait generations later.

It is important to note that there are multiple things going on at once. We have to consider a combination of factors in order to understand why bacteria are still with us today. Let's use an illustration. Bacteria are like bicycles. People are like sports cars. One can make a number of modifications to both without breaking them, but there are fewer parts in a bicycle, so any given modification is more likely to produce a non-working bicycle. They need two wheels, a handle bar, a frame, a chain, and at least two gear sprockets. There is very little you can remove from them or break before they can't be used. Cars, on the other hand, don't need a roof, windshield, or headlights. There are a lot more modifications you can make to a car and still drive it around. You may not get to work on time, because it does not operate at full potential, but the car can still be driven. But why, if mutation is more likely to kill or harm a bacterial cell, do they still exist?

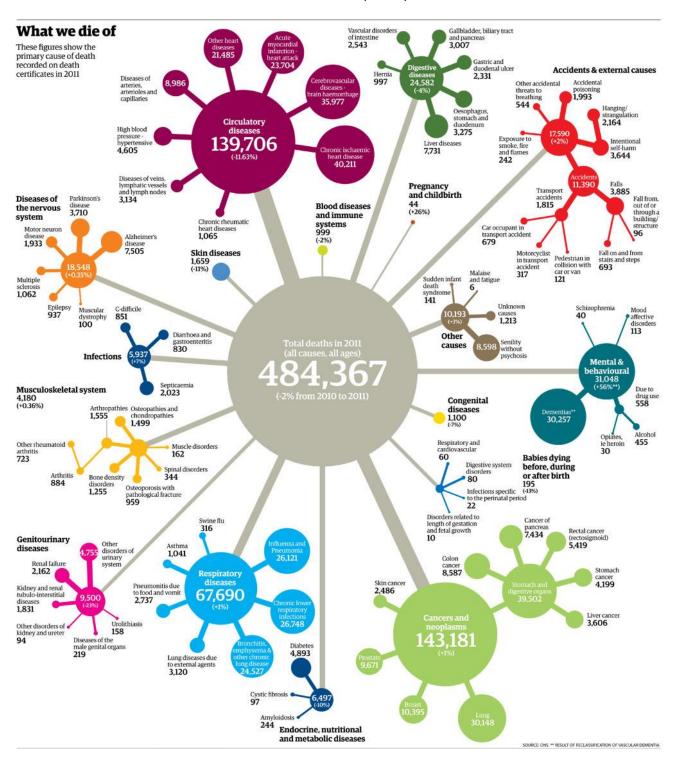
Bacteria still exist because they have a lower overall mutation rate. The mutation rate in E. coli has been estimated to be about 1 in 10^{-10} , or one mutation for every 10 billion letters copied. Compare this to the size of the E. coli genome (about 4.2 million letters) and you can see that mutation is rare per cell. Now compare this statistic to the estimated rate of mutation per newborn human baby (about 100 new mutations per child) one can begin to see the problem. Thus, there are nearly always non-mutated bacteria around, enabling the species to survive. However, there are also always mutated bacteria present, so the species are able to explore new ecological niches (although most known examples have arisen at the expense of long-term survival).

Humanity has a "use by" date but that of course does not rule out the Divine intervention before that, at the second coming. One way or the other though, we are destined to meet our Maker. For some sooner than later, yet to my mind, most Christians live in 'La la land'. They have no appreciation of the fact that this primeval decay is a consequence of sin and part of the design for this life. They live in a hopeful world where every thing must be healed, everything must get better, everything staves off death, nothing bad should happen, everyone must come to their departure and

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⁶⁵ Creation Ministries http://creation.com/genetic-entropy-and-simple-organisms

die painlessly in bed with their boots off. That seldom happens and few people pass away with 'natural causes' as the chart for the UK cause of death (below) shows⁶⁶.



The great goal of medicine is to keep people alive for as long as possible, to try and en able them to enjoy the best quality of life, to live long and prosper and we will spend fortunes to achieve this. On the face of it, it seems a noble aim, indeed if this were all that life had to offer, we might agree with

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⁶⁶ https://static.guim.co.uk/sys-images/Guardian/Pix/pictures/2012/11/6/1352225082582/Mortality-rates-big-graph-001.jpg

the idea. But it is not all that there is and it must be clear to every Christian that the investment that they must make is not in this fleeting life but in the life to come. Joh 6:27 Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

Jesus' healing must be set against this background of terminal decline. For whatever purpose He healed and heals today, it still primarily shows that He alone is the Master of life and it is not just about us. John Sandford closes his book on Genetic Entropy with these words, "I humbly put before you this alternative paradigm for your consideration – Jesus is our one true hope".

So how long have we got until it all ends? John Sandford cites research showing that the human race is currently degenerating at 1-2 % per generation due to accumulation of mutations. At a 1% decline in fitness per generation, there is a sharp reduction in fitness after 300 generations (about 6,000 years). One of the most interesting revelations in Genetic Entropy is Dr. Sanford's and other workers' analysis of the Biblical account of life expectancies. In a statistical regression analysis of declining life spans since Noah (who lived 950 years), after 32 centuries since Noah, life expectancy has declined to about 70 years. The remarkable aspect is that this curve, which shows a sharp drop-off after Noah and a more gradual decline about 1,000 years ago, is that it is very similar to theoretical curves presented by other researchers that show genetic degeneration. Either Moses faithfully recorded the events (and ages) recorded in Genesis, or he was a skilled statistician who made up data with a remarkable fit to an exponential curve!

There will be a time in the life of every man, when his heart would beat its last and the process of decay will set in. Most of those in the time before the Flood, lived vast ages compared with our life span. Some had not even commenced to produce a family until they were ancient by our standards. We can only speculate as to why men lived longer before the Flood and here are some of the suggestions (taken from "Answers in Genesis").

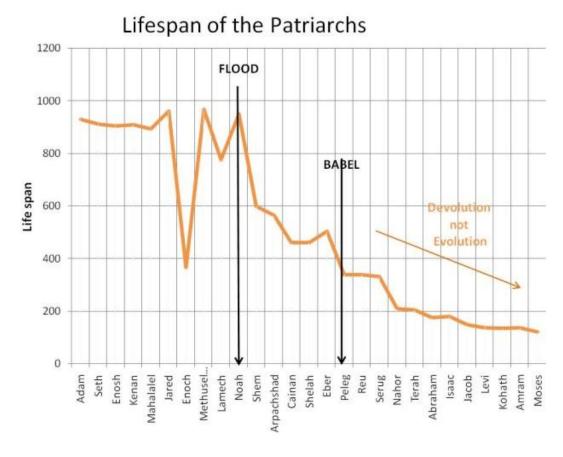
Firstly the diet appears to have been different, certainly as far as the believing population went. Mankind was first permitted to eat meat after the Flood *Gen 9:3 Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.* Did a vegetarian diet really work? *Gen 1:29 And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.* Daniel the prophet certainly preferred a vegetarian diet but it certainly did not extend his life span to the degree of the antediluvian patriarchs and there is little evidence that vegetarians have a different life span to meat eaters.

Some have proposed that increased oxygen levels prior to the Flood (which changed significantly after the Flood) would allow the body to better heal and eliminate disease. And although there are some benefits to a temporary increase in oxygen in some cases (e.g., hyperbaric medicine), in other cases it is detrimental to your health (e.g., birth defects such as blindness in children due to supplemental oxygen, oxygen toxicity, swelling of lenses in the eye causing blurred vision, etc.). Increased oxygen levels can cause a host of other problems because oxygen is extremely reactive, causing oxidation where your body doesn't want it. People often eat foods that are high in antioxidants to

reduce these extra "free radicals" of oxygen. Regardless, the simple fact is that such experiments have not permitted people to live to ages remotely close to 900 years.

Environmental Changes. The world changed significantly due to the Flood. Vegetation, as well as land and sea life, were drastically reduced and made to virtually "start all over again." But did this cause aging to significantly drop off? Noah, who was already 600 years old, stepped off the Ark into this new world as well. If the environment was the cause of the reduced age, why did Noah live 350 more years? Noah was the third longest lived person recorded in the Bible (after Methuselah and Jared)! If the environmental effects were the cause, then this does not make sense—unless these environmental effects were more gradual. This is not to say environmental changes had no impact, but those effects were not the primary cause of life spans dropping about nine times.

Genetics. We need to keep in mind that there were two major genetic bottlenecks: At the Flood and at the Tower of Babel.



Flood Bottleneck. Genetic bottlenecks cause a significant loss of access to other people's versions of genes (called alleles) that are essentially lost. The obvious loss of pre-Flood people reduced the alleles in the gene pool in humanity to only eight people, but really only six. Scripture reveals that Noah and his wife had no more sons after the Flood. So, this leaves Shem, Ham, and Japheth and their wives, and, of course, these

three men each inherited their genes from the same two parents. So, early generations after the Flood, like early generations after the Garden of Eden, saw marriages between people who were close relatives. Of course, such close intermarriage was not forbidden until the time of Moses. Regardless, this bottleneck saw the loss of a great many alleles from the gene pool of those who died in the Flood.

Tower Bottleneck. If you look at the ages of people born after the Flood, the ages do a sudden drop but are stabilized at about 450 years or so. So, the ages seem to drop significantly, where Shem, who was born prior to Flood, lived to 600. After the Tower, ages suddenly drop from about 450 to about 235 or so for three generations: Even two generations after this, Terah lived to only 205. But age limits trickle down from there. So the Flood and the Tower bottlenecks did something significant to cause ages to drop. In both cases, there is a loss or splitting up of the gene pool. Consider also how mutations can affect age with an extreme example: One Tiny Flaw, and 50 Years Lost!

With these bottlenecks, a host of alleles (alternative forms of the same gene) would have been filtered out and lost. For example, immune systems may not be as good, resulting in more infectious disease.

Shem: An Intriguing Clue. Another interesting clue comes from Shem. The bottleneck at the Flood would not have affected Noah, as his genetics were not bound by that event. And he lived 350 years after the Flood and died at 950 years. Ham and Japheth's ages are not recorded in Scripture. But Shem was 600 years when he died. Either of the bottlenecks, the Flood or the Tower, would not have affected Shem's longevity.

And yet, his age was significantly reduced from his father's. The Bible does not record the cause of death; so, it is possible that something caused a premature death. However, it seems likely that he died of old age. And this is a clue that there may have been a genetic problem that passed through Noah to Shem (and perhaps Ham and Japheth, too) to trigger a drop in ages.

It is possible that there was a genetic mistake hidden within Lamech. Lamech, Noah's father, only lived to 777. In the reality of his day, he was young pup! Methuselah, Lamech's father, lived nearly 200 years longer than Lamech! So, it is possible that there was a genetic mistake hidden within Lamech that occurred between Methuselah and his son Lamech.

If this defective gene had been passed to Noah from Lamech, and yet masked by a good gene from Noah's mother, it may not have affected him, and, hence, he still lived to a ripe old age of 950 years. But Noah could still pass this defect along to his sons, such as Shem, who lived to 600 years. But why couldn't this have been masked by a good gene from Noah's mother . . . unless she too had this defective gene?But, of course, this is biblical speculation.

The fact that men lived vast ages did not mean that they could not be killed. Abel was murdered. People were wiped out in the flood. Mortality was a reality. What about disease? We have to define "disease" in order to define "healing".

Dictionary definitions of disease are:

- A disordered or incorrectly functioning organ, part, structure, or system of the body resulting from the effect of genetic or developmental errors, infection, poisons, nutritional deficiency or imbalance, toxicity, or unfavourable environmental factors; illness; sickness; ailment.
- Any abnormal condition in a plant that interferes with its vital physiological processes, caused by pathogenic microorganisms, parasites, unfavorable environmental, genetic, or nutritional factors, etc.
- Any harmful, depraved, or morbid condition, as of the mind or society.

Interestingly we do not see Jesus healing trees, plants or animals. There is an occasion when water is healed: 2Ki 2:20 And he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they brought it to him. 2Ki 2:21 And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the LORD, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land.

The Creator introduced imbalance in Nature as a result of sin and this was first shown in the dominance of thorns and thistles. *Gen 3:18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;* I do not think that the Creator decided to create a new variety of plant life as a curse, because I take it that His creating was complete. What caused the changes? Here again are some thoughts from "Answers in Genesis⁶⁷"

God designed the created kinds with genetic information that could be turned on when required to adapt to new environments. Each cell expresses, or turns on, only a fraction of its genes. The rest of the genes are repressed, or turned off. The process of turning genes on and off is known as gene regulation. Differences in gene expression rather than gene structure may be primarily responsible for successful plant adaptation. Adaptation implies changes in the genetic makeup that allow an organism to survive better in a given environment. With successful (random) changes, an organism is better enabled to pass on this more successful genetic material, which improves the viability of its offspring and increases the presence of these successful genes in the gene pool overall. The changes do not add information; they alter genetic information. In other words, the Creator continues to accomplish His purpose for organisms after creation, not by creating new kinds, but by working through existing components that were designed during Creation Week or by changes that have taken place since the Fall. We are familiar with the plight of animals and man, but what about plants, which provide the oxygen we breathe and much of what we eat? The following examines plant defence mechanisms in more detail to improve our understanding of the fallen world in which we currently exist and how to understand the weeds and thorns that come into both our spiritual and physical lives.

Botanically speaking: thorns (example hawthorn) are modified, sharp-pointed stems occurring at the base of a leaf or ends of twigs. Spines (example Barberry, cacti) are modified leaves or parts of leaves and are generally thinner and shorter than thorns.

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⁶⁷ https://answersingenesis.org/biology/plants/thorns-and-thistles/

Prickles (example rose stem) are slender outgrowths of the plant outer layer (epidermis). Plant thorns were brought into the world after man sinned

Plants have the same defence mechanisms as animals. Animals have sharp spines (fish fins, snapper turtle shells, alligator tails, spiny lizards, starfish), horns and antlers (many hoofed animals), sharp teeth (carnivores, snakes, fish), sharp guills (porcupines, hedgehogs, sea urchins), and claws to defend themselves. Do plants have thorns just so we won't pick their flowers? No, plants have defence mechanisms against animals who want to eat them (herbivores). Plant physical defence mechanisms include thorns, spines, prickles, tough tissues, sticky resins, milky sap, and short bristly hairs. In addition, plants have developed chemical defences to avoid being eaten and to deter other plants from invading their growing area.

Paleopathology reveals that diseases were also present in ancient societies. Among the earliest records of a viral infection is an Egyptian stele thought to depict an Egyptian priest from the 18th Dynasty (1580–1350 BC) with a foot drop deformity, characteristic of a poliovirus infection. The mummy of Siptah, a ruler during the 19th Dynasty, shows signs of poliomyelitis, and that of Ramesses V and some other Egyptian mummies buried over 3000 years ago show evidence of smallpox. There was an epidemic of smallpox in Athens in 430 BC, in which a quarter of the Athenian army and many of the city's civilians died from the infection.

Perhaps these are the historical records of how our immune system also failed us and contributed to our decline? Amidst all of these afflictions, illnesses and deformities, we have yet to ask the question, "What is normal?" What can we expect to be heaedl and what do we just have to live with?

29. Do we need doctors?

We have not considered the issue of Divine healing against the ministrations of Doctors. There are those who consider that as Christians we should only seek Divine healing. I have told before, the story of a dear old brother who decided that the Lord had healed his eyes and duly threw away his spectacles. It was hopeful but wishful thinking and he returned to wearing spectacles which were the work of a fellow human, to correct his failing sight.

As we have been examining the whole subject of Divine healing, it cannot have escaped our attention that miraculous healing is uncommon in Scripture outside of the ministry of Jesus, even a rarity in both Testaments. The healings in Jesus ministry are demonstrative of His power and authority, Christ the Creator, and prove that He is the Saviour of mankind in body, soul and spirit. New Testament healings in the book of Acts again mainly demonstrate the continuing power of Christ in support of the Gospel, as the Gospel is spread through His ministers.

Within the body of Christ, healing gifts are present, 1Co 12:9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; 1Co 12:10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: There is nothing to prove that these were taken away from the early church and should not exist today, however, we do not know precisely what the "gifts (plural) of healing" were or how they were used.

We also see within that body of believers methods of healing that were not miraculous. 1Ti 5:23 Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities. This we might call 'common sense life style'. You may recall the earlier ministry where Dr John Snow monitored the Soho cholera outbreak that was traced to bacterial infested water and where those who worked at the local brewery and drank beer were spared the disease. There is then a healing that comes through the application of science and knowledge that is not miraculous.

There was also the healing that was brought about through the ministry of prayer, Jas 5:14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: Jas 5:15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Jas 5:16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

One of the things that we would be hard pressed to demonstrate is that there is any formula that we could apply in order to guarantee being healed. What then can we say of those whose mission in life is to make people well? People like Dr Luke, close friend and travelling companion of the Apostle Paul, *Col 4:14 Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you*. Of course, that endorsement by the Apostle is not an endorsement of the medical profession but neither is it a rejection of it.

How should we view the medical profession from a Christian perspective? Let me start by going back to what is often called "the Creation Mandate", Gen 1:28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. Gen 1:29 And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. Man's task was to act as God's manager over His creation. We sometimes designate this role as a vicegerent, a person exercising delegated power on behalf of a sovereign or ruler.

That role had a number of degrees of freedom. *Gen 2:19* And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. Gen 2:20 And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. The Creator did not create the animals and then after naming them, hand them to the man. He watched what the man would call them and that was what "the name thereof" became. God endorsed the wisdom of His creature.

This was a Divine harmony, not freewill because man acted within the compass of the abilities that His maker had given to him. We observe that Adam was also endowed with reason, wisdom and the ability to communicate with a language. He was a high functioning being, created with age and I suggest many abilities.

God was confident in the ability of His pinnacle of Creation, mankind, to get on and manage it well. This I suppose you could say was another element of the Creator's wonderful design. He had designed an incredibly competent creature, one in whom He could have confidence. He could watch as that man explored the Creation and exercised Dominion. It would in a sense be like a parent watching as his dear child explores the world, exercising the wisdom that He had placed in him.

The question is, "did that dominion mandate extend beyond the fall?" When Adam sinned, did the rules change? Only in so far as the task became much more difficult, Gen 3:17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; That 'dominion' would be exercised through God's chosen people, the seed. Gen 3:14 And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: Gen 3:15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Man still bears the image of his Creator. Gen 9:6 Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man. Murdering a man is defacing the image of God, even though that image may be tarnished with sin. I also think that because man carries the image of God, even in his fallen state he still has many of the capabilities that he was created with. He is tarnished, morally 'depraved' but still functional. Within that image were the God given abilities to undertake the management of Creation and it would manifest itself in many different ways as mankind gained mastery over his appointed environment. Within a few generations we see a range of skills appear, Gen 4:20 And Adah bare Jabal: he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle. Gen 4:21 And his brother's name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ. Gen 4:22 And Zillah, she also bare Tubalcain, an instructer of every artificer in brass and iron: and the sister of Tubalcain was Naamah. Nomadic herdsmen capable of working metals and developing musical instruments. These skill sets appear to be innate to the created being.

My thesis is that the development of medical and surgical skills is quite reasonably based in the creation mandate and within the skill sets that man was created with. I further suggest that when we deal with the subject of healing, we should not view Divine healing and human healing as different. They are not antithetical, opposed to each other but complimentary, since every good gift comes from above. Jas 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. We might say that when God intervenes and heals and we call that a miracle, when a man heals, it is through the wisdom that his Creator has endowed him with.

Did the Creator really endow men with an innate knowledge of life skills? A basic skill set which he could build upon? I do not see that this is an unreasonable idea since man was also created with the essential biological functions programmed in, so to speak, to enable him to undertake his mission. The rapid development of his technology suggest that he was helped in this task.

Although the Bible does not talk much about medicines, we do have evidence of surrounding cultures having medical knowledge 68

Due to the hot and dry climate in Egypt, ancient papyri have survived intact, allowing historians to study the sophisticated techniques employed by Ancient Egyptian physicians. Whilst couched in magic and ritual, the Egyptians possessed a great deal of knowledge of healing herbs and repairing physical injuries, amongst the normal population and the workers responsible for building the great monuments of that

⁶⁸ https://explorable.com/ancient-medicine

nation. Modern research has shown that these builders were not slaves but highly respected and well-treated freemen, and the care and treatment given for injuries and afflictions was centuries ahead of its time. Early paid retirement, in case of injury, and sick leave were some of the farsighted policies adopted by Ancient Egyptian medicine, luxuries that would rarely be enjoyed by most workers until well into the 20th Century. The Egyptians made sure that the labourers were fed a diet rich in radish, garlic and onion, which modern researchers have found to be extremely rich in Raphanin, Allicin and Allistatin. These powerful natural antibiotics would certainly help to prevent outbreaks of disease in the often-crowded conditions of the work camps.

Ancient Egyptian practitioners were also adept at performing eye-surgery, no surprise in the desert where foreign objects blown into the eye could cause irritation. Innovatively, the Egyptian doctors cured Night-Blindness by feeding the patient powdered liver, rich in Vitamin A. The physicians drew upon a great store of knowledge in the Peri-Ankh, the Houses of Life; here, students were taught and papyri documenting procedures were stored. Physiotherapy and heat-therapy were used to treat aches and pains, and Ancient Egyptian medicine included repairing and splinting broken bones, as shown by successfully healed skeletons. Priest-doctors also practiced amputation, using linens and antiseptics to reduce the chance of infection and gangrene, and there is some evidence that they employed prosthetics where needed.

The information remaining about the medicines and herbs used by the Egyptian physicians is remarkable. Whilst some of the most outlandish cures had little effect, many of the herbs they used have been shown to have positive effects upon ailments and are still used by modern herbalists, thousands of years later:

- Honey: An excellent antiseptic, used to treat wounds, and an ancient cure that is now increasingly used by the British Military to treat burns.
- Willow: A concoction of this was used to treat toothache and willow bark formed the basis of modern aspirin.
- Mint: Used to treat gastric ailments and mint is another cure that is still used today.
- Pomegranate: Used to treat infestations of parasitic worms, and modern scientists have found that the high tannin content of this fruit actually does paralyse worms, known to Ancient Egyptian medicine as the 'snakes of the digestive system.

You may wish to explore this subject further and see that in many ancient cultures, they were capable of dentistry, cataract surgery, trepanning the skull and healing wounds using sutures and even making prosthetics for limb damage. They probably learned a lot about anatomy through mummification and embalming.

We must however guard against seeking healing from man, when we know that the cause of the problem is spiritual, seeking physicians not the Lord. Asking for a human remedy to cure a judicial act of God. 2Ch 16:12 And Asa in the thirty and ninth year of his reign was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great: yet in his disease he sought not to the LORD, but to the physicians.

If it is the result that counts, then it matters little if we are healed by God or by man but as we have seen, neither are permanent. If it is the means of healing that counts then we may be flattered that the Creator has intervened directly in our lives but that does not mean the healing is any less valuablewhenit is a doctor and whether by the Creator or man, the result is still for a short time only.

Jesus acknowledges that sick people need physicians, Mat 9:11 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? Mat 9:12 But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. Rendering someone healthy was a focus of Jesus ministry and was a 'lawfully good deed'. Mar 3:4 And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace. Mar 3:5 And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other. Making people well is inherently 'good'. It is that better part of fallen humanity.

Here we need to consider, "to what extent can an unbeliever work rationally in the healing profession?" This issue is brought clearly into focus when we consider general practice compared with psychiatry. We shall examine this under the heading of 'science' which is defined as:

"....the intellectual and practical activity encompassing the systematic study of the structure and behaviour of the physical and natural world through observation and experiment".

When we go to the doctor, are we being treated scientifically, do my symptoms have a physical manifestation which can be cured by the application of proven clinical practice and medicines, or is it just guessing and sticking plasters? Can we associate successful treatment, a cure with a remedy? Back in the early days when radioactivity was new science, people jumped upon the bandwagon of the supposed benefits that it brought. There were radium cosmetics (face lifting without plastic surgery), radium lipstick, radium chocolate, radium soda siphons so you could have a dose with your whisky. All the sorts of miracle cures and 'snake oil' treatments that you read about today in the Daily Mail. Suddenly a new disease appeared called, "radium necrosis," a polite term for the painful process of one's jaw disintegrating and developing tumours and throat cancers. People were using a scientific discovery in an unscientific way.

However, many of the health benefits that we enjoy today are the results of good scientific methodology. For example the work of the meticulous Christian, Dr Louis Pasteur, in both observation and application, has improved our health and quality of life. Louis Pasteur discovered that microbes were responsible for souring alcohol and came up with the process of pasteurization, where bacteria is destroyed by heating beverages and then allowing them to cool. His work in germ theory also led him and his team to create vaccinations for anthrax and rabies. Pasteur's first vaccine discovery was in 1879, with a disease called chicken cholera. He also saved the silk industry from a disease affecting silkworms. We can see in Pasteur's work how he linked cause and effect and produced cures.

My father-in-law went for months with undiagnosed tuberculosis and it was only when a locum stepped in, who recognised the symptoms that he could be treated but by then it was too late and he died weeks later. Now I am not saying that doctors do not achieve many good things and the

majority are sincere dedicated people but they are all fallible humans and since the medical field is so large, there will be gaps in knowledge and experience. A study⁶⁹ revealed (2009) that doctors were making mistakes in up to 15 per cent of cases because they were too quick to judge patients' symptoms, while others were reluctant to ask more senior colleagues for help. In most cases the misdiagnosis did not result in the patient suffering serious harm, a sizeable number of the millions of NHS patients were likely to suffer significant health problems as a result. It was said that the number of misdiagnoses was "just the tip of the iceberg", with many people still reluctant to report mistakes by their doctors.

It may also be that since a doctor is reliant upon the patient's description of their symptoms, misdiagnosis is in partly due to the patient. Some things however may be more obvious when diagnosing a patient, for example with a broken bone sticking out of the skin but others require a more complex diagnostic procedure and analysis of blood, urine and tumours. This is all good practical stuff but when we come to the so called illnesses of the mind, **is it such an exacting science**? Can the psychiatrist precisely diagnose the cause and effect, the physiological disturbance, the connection between the patient behaviour and a guaranteed cure? This, I think is the difference between medical doctors and psychiatrists and we shall examine this in more detail. In an article in the New Yorker, this issue was raised⁷⁰:

In 1886, Pliny Earle, then the superintendent of the state hospital for the insane in Northampton, Massachusetts, complained to his fellow psychiatrists that "in the present state of our knowledge, no classification of insanity can be erected upon a pathological basis." Doctors in other specialties were using microscopes and chemical assays to discern the material causes of illness and to classify diseases accordingly. But psychiatrists, confronted with the impenetrable complexities of the brain, were "forced to fall back upon the symptomatology of the disease—the apparent mental condition, as judged from the outward manifestations." The rest of medicine may have been galloping into modernity on the back of science, but Earle and his colleagues were being left in the dust.

Thirty years later, they had not caught up. In 1917, Thomas Salmon, another leading psychiatrist, echoed Earle's worry in an address to his colleagues, drawing their attention to the way that their reliance on appearances had resulted in a "chaotic" diagnostic system, which, he said, "discredits the science of psychiatry and reflects unfavorably upon our association." Psychiatry, Salmon continued, needed a nosology ⁷¹that would "meet the scientific demands of the day" if it was to command public trust.

In the century that has passed since Salmon's lament, doctors in most medical specialties have only gotten better at sorting our suffering according to its biochemical causes. They have learned how to turn symptom into clues, and, like Sherlock Holmes stalking a criminal, to follow the evidence to the culprit. With a blood test or tissue

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⁶⁹ As many as one in six patients treated in NHS hospitals and GPs' surgeries is being misdiagnosed, experts have warned. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/health/news/6216559/One-in-six-NHS-patients-misdiagnosed.html

⁷⁰ Does psychiatry need science? By Gary Greenberg, April 23, 2013

culture, they can determine whether a skin rash is poison ivy or syphilis, or whether a cough is a symptom of a cold or of lung cancer. Sure-footed diagnosis is what we have come to expect from our physicians. It gives us some comfort, and the confidence to submit to their treatments.

But psychiatrists still cannot meet this demand. A detailed understanding of the brain, with its hundred billion neurons and trillions of synapses, remains elusive, leaving psychiatry dependent on outward manifestations for its taxonomy of mental illnesses.

It is also important to understand whether a particular world view will affect the treatment. "Sigmund Freud reduced all religious beliefs to the status of illusion and called religion "the obsessional neurosis of humanity." He viewed religion as delusionary and, therefore, evil and the source of mental problems. Both Jung's and Freud's positions are anti-Christian. One denies Christianity and the other mythologizes it. Repudiating the God of the Bible, both Freud and Jung led their followers in the quest for alternative understandings of mankind and alternative solutions to problems of living. They turned inward to their own limited imaginations and viewed their subjects from their own anti-Christian subjectivity. "2"

When a Christian doctor and an atheist doctor look at a bone sticking out of the flesh, both see the same thing and both will apply the same treatment (hopefully and successfully). There will be a standard approach. When someone claims to be a healer of the mind, they are generally trying to look into a black box. There will be external manifestations of a possible problem (OCD, PTSD, etc) and the aim will be to find some way of treating the perceived problem.

It is my contention that a Christian and an atheist (an unbeliever) will have different ideas about what is in the mind, causing an external behaviour. This will also be part of our study because we believe that when Jesus enters into the life of man, He does not always improve their physical health or heal them. One thing that is guaranteed however, is that He will work on our minds, renewing our thinking, because, 2Co 5:17 Whoever is a believer in Christ is a new creation. The old way of living has disappeared. A new way of living has come into existence. GW.

30. What is Normal?

We have not yet considered the idea as to what constitutes normal health in this life or what is a normal person. Do we just have to put up with some ailments because that is how life is? What constitutes a disease that requires healing and what is 'par for the course of life', what is to be expected, accepted and 'normal'? For example, take these statements, Exo 4:10 And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. Exo 4:11 And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD (JEHOVAH)?....and....Isa 45:7 I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD (JEHOVAH) do all these things.

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⁷² http://www.rapidnet.com/~jbeard/bdm/Psychology/psych.htm

Moses apparent speech impediment or lack of eloquence, 'heavy of speech and heavy of tongue', if that is what it was, did not get healed by the Lord. It was complimented by his brother Aaron and it was sufficient that God was with him. As I will show, some things in our lives are overcome by the help of others, helpmeets. The Lord reveals that He alone is responsible for making people deaf, dumb, sighted or blind. These are the works of the Lord and manifestations of His power. I have no need to defend the Creator for these things, for they are clearly stated and He takes full responsibility for them.

These manifestations or variations of the human form are as the Scriptures show acts of God. They are not variations caused by random events. If God has made us with these forms, why would we ask for healing for them? Why would we not be content to live with them? Php 4:11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. Php 4:12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. Php 4:13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

You may like to meditate upon "why did/do people seek healing from Jesus?" To serve Him better or to serve self?

We may think that it is better to be fully functioning, to have all of our faculties but it can also cause problems. Mat 5:27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: Mat 5:28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. Mat 5:29 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. Mat 5:30 And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. The implication is that it is better to be blind than see and lust. Better to be deprived of things which cause us to stumble than to enter hell. Better to be poor than lose all through riches. Mat 19:23 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Dare we suggest that many of the physiological differences between us humans, are things that need healing? Do we really need healing because we are going deaf with age or do we just need a few minor corrections to make life liveable. Do we compensate by learning sign language or getting a hearing aid? These after all are in a manner of speaking 'healing' but the aches and pains of age are just signs that we are approaching life's end. I never read that Jesus replaced lost limbs, mended broken bones so I am assuming that the healings He did were quite specific and some things we just have to live with. Is a one legged Christian a lesser person than a two legged Christian? Is a short Christian better than a tall Christian?

Fanny J Crosby, the blind hymn writer describes her condition, "I have not, for a moment, in more than eighty-five years, felt a spark of resentment against Him; for I have always believed that the good Lord, in His infinite mercy, by this means consecrated me to the work that I am still permitted to do. When I remember how I have been blessed, how can I repine?" Fanny Crosby resolved when she was a child, that her blindness should not make her unhappy, or prevent her from being useful in the world; she never allowed those around her to pity her because she was blind. She wrote: "Darkness may throw a shadow over my outer vision, but there is no cloud that can keep the

sunlight of hope from a trustful soul. One of the earliest resolves that I formed in my young and joyous heart was to leave all care to yesterday, and to believe that the morrow would bring its own peculiar joy." She maintained this positive outlook all her life and considered her blindness a blessing, not the curse many would be tempted to call it, and never considered herself handicapped.

When we ask, "What is a normal life?" we generally mean what is the 'average' condition for mankind? What should we be 'like' on average, what features and attributes should we possess in life, such that we could be described as normal? For some this would mean "how should I look so that I will not stand out in a crowd?" How might we define it? Do we look at normality at a genetic level? If we did, for example, if we knew the composition of Adam's DNA, what could we say? We could say that is was "good" but was that the standard template by which we would judge all of his progeny? What could we say of it if we observed certain changes of form?

Environmental factors also appear to affect how we might physically develop, as the study of Epigenetics appears to show. Are the variants of the original DNA map that Adam possessed, normal or abnormal? Did the Lord design us deliberately to fail and that one form of epigenetic variation is the impact of Sin? What was 'normal' at the creation may no longer be normal now. One of the changes that appears to have occurred affects longevity. The Bible data on life spans shows a marked decrease in age which levels off at around 70 years. *Psa 90:10 The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.*

It may be that the whole concept of 'normality' is down to what we are prepared to accept in life and what we have to accept becomes normal. Yet here we must make a distinction. Normality can be defined in a number of ways. For example **morally (ethically) normal**, it can be defined as **biologically (biotically) normal** and it can be defined **mentally (sensitively) normal** (see Herman Dooyeweerd "modal aspect of temporal reality").

Morality has changed over the last century, undermining long held beliefs about right and wrong. What was wrong when I was a boy is now acceptable. It is in fact so acceptable, that if I voice my displeasure, I am now the criminal and I need to be reprogrammed to accept the latest diktats of the 'thought' police. What was once morally normal for me has been changed.

Can we say then that there is a moral 'norm'? Yes we can because it was given to us by our Creator. Eph 4:13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: There is the image of God the "perfect" (telos) man. Col 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: Christians have a set of moral values defined by Christ and enabled by our relationship with Him.

Based upon this, I see that a lot of behaviours that are deemed acceptable in society, are abnormal by the Creator's standards. They are not 'normal' in the eyes of God and as such they are unacceptable to both Him and us, 1Co 6:9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 1Co 6:10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the Kingdom of God. They are not good company for a Christian. These behaviours are lifestyle choices contrary to and unacceptable to the Creator.

Biologically we have considerable variability. We have a range of eye colouration, height, skin tone, build type that suggests that there is no such thing as normal. Humans are the spectrum produced from Adam's DNA. Each and every variation as good as the other, all proceeding from the Creator. We might also expect humans to be born without imperfections, born with sight, hearing, a full compliment of functioning limbs, functioning minds with the ability to learn. To those who do not fit these criteria, we label as disabled. Are we as Christians right to use that as a description instead of terms like blind, deaf, dumb and lame? After all, these are the words that the Creator uses. They are not disabled to Him, they are functioning perfectly as He wishes them to. They are special variants of humanity fulfilling a purpose.

From a spiritual/typical point of view,they are in His terms, 'blemished' or better, 'stained'. Lev 21:17 Speak to Aaron, saying, No man of your seed throughout their generations shall draw near to offer the bread of his God if there is a **blemish** (מאוּם = m'ûm = stain) in him. Lev 21:18 For no man in whom there is a **blemish** (= cataract) shall draw near, a blind man, or one lame, or disfigured, or deformed; Lev 21:19 or a brokenfooted man, or a brokenhanded man, Lev 21:20 or one humpbacked, or one emaciated, or with a spot in his eye, or a scurvy one, or one scabbed, or one with crushed testicles. Lev 21:21 No man of the seed of Aaron the priest in whom there is a blemish shall come near to offer the fire offerings of Jehovah; a blemish is in him; he shall not come near to offer the bread of his God.

These 'stained' or 'blemished' souls stand to remind us that God's ministers must be without blemish. They remind us that our High Priest Christ is without spot or blemish, *Deu 15:21 And if there be any blemish therein, as if it be lame, or blind, or have any ill blemish, thou shalt not sacrifice it unto the LORD thy God. Exo 12:5 Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year:* They remind us that our service too must be perfect, *Eph 5:27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church,* **not having spot, or wrinkle**, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

What some call disabilities, Divine blemishes, are there to teach us to share our abilities rather than exist in isolation. We are not to segregate ourselves from them, as Job teaches us. Job 29:15 I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. Job 29:16 I was a father to the poor: and the cause which I knew not I searched out. These differences exist to try our goodness. Lev 19:14 Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumblingblock before the blind, but shalt fear thy God: I am the LORD. They are there to make us kind people. Deu 27:18 Cursed be he that maketh the blind to wander out of the way. And all the people shall say, Amen. They are there to make us charitable people, sympathetic people and empathetic people. C H Spurgeon's thoughts are pertinent:

Pro11:25 "He that watereth shall be watered also himself." We are here taught the great lesson, that to get, we must give; that to accumulate, we must scatter; that to make ourselves happy, we must make others happy; and that in order to become spiritually vigorous, we must seek the spiritual good of others. In watering others, we are ourselves watered. How? Our efforts to be useful, bring out our powers for usefulness. We have latent talents and dormant faculties, which are brought to light by exercise. Our strength for labour is hidden even from ourselves, until we venture forth to fight the Lord's battles, or to climb the mountains of difficulty. We do not know what tender sympathies we possess until we try to dry the widow's tears, and soothe the orphan's grief. We

often find in attempting to teach others, that we gain instruction for ourselves. Oh, what gracious lessons some of us have learned at sick beds! We went to teach the Scriptures, we came away blushing that we knew so little of them. In our converse with poor saints, we are taught the way of God more perfectly for ourselves and get a deeper insight into divine truth. So that watering others makes us humble. We discover how much grace there is where we had not looked for it; and how much the poor saint may outstrip us in knowledge. Our own comfort is also increased by our working for others. We endeavour to cheer them, and the consolation gladdens our own heart. Like the two men in the snow; one chafed the other's limbs to keep him from dying, and in so doing kept his own blood in circulation, and saved his own life. The poor widow of Sarepta gave from her scanty store a supply for the prophet's wants, and from that day she never again knew what want was. Give then, and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, and running over.

Why then you ask, if what I am saying is correct, did Jesus come along healing these people? Mat 4:23 Jesus went all over Galilee. He taught in the synagogues and spread the Good News of the kingdom. He also cured every disease and sickness among the people. Mat 4:24 The news about Jesus spread throughout Syria. People brought him everyone who was sick, those who suffered from any kind of disease or pain. They also brought epileptics, those who were paralyzed, and people possessed by demons, and he cured them all. He cured all those that were "brought" to Him or came to Him but He did not cast this miracle across the whole of the earth. There were many who would not have even heard of Jesus. There were many who remained lame, blind and deaf for the duration of their life.

It merely confirms that it was NOT Jesus purpose to unleash universal healing at that time. Where there was healing, there was the presence of Jesus. It was not all about healing but it was all about Jesus. This is the association that makes Him the Saviour of the body. Many remained unhealed so that we may care for them. I would put these blemished souls in the same category as the poor. Deu 15:11 For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land. They are there to test those who are able bodied and I believe they will never cease to exist.

There is also another 'normality' that relates to our mental state, our state of mind or our mental capabilities. Mental health is defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as "not just the absence of mental disorder. It is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community." Mental health should be considered as important as physical health for a person's wellbeing.

The Mental Health Act is the law in the UK which sets out when you can be admitted, detained and treated in hospital against your wishes. It is also known as being 'sectioned'. For this to happen, certain people must agree that you have a mental disorder that requires a stay in hospital. There you will have an assessment and be given treatment if needed. This is only done (supposedly) when you are putting your own safety or someone else's at risk. You can sometimes be given treatment even if you don't want it.

When the Mental Health Act talks about someone with mental health problems and whether or not they should be sectioned, it often uses the term "mental disorder". The Act defines this as "any disorder or disability of mind" (section 1). Mental disorder can include:

- any mental health problem normally diagnosed in psychiatry
- learning disabilities, if the disability makes you act in a way which may seem "abnormally aggressive" or "seriously irresponsible"

It includes mental health conditions such as: schizophrenia, depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), eating disorders, and personality disorders. It also includes other conditions such as dementia, changes in behaviour due to brain injury, mental disorders due to drug use and autistic spectrum disorders. The definition includes learning disability only where it is associated with abnormally aggressive or seriously irresponsible behaviour.

Hospital managers (also known as Mental Health Act managers), are an independent team of people in a hospital who make sure that the requirements of the Mental Health Act are properly applied. They have certain important responsibilities and can make decisions related to your detention, for example, they can hear your application to be discharged from your section and decide whether or not to discharge you.

According to the American Psychological Association (APA):

.....a strong and passionate belief in a deity or higher power, to the point where it impairs one's ability to make conscientious decisions about common sense matters, will now be classified as a mental illness (July 2015). The controversial ruling comes after a 5 year study by the APA showed devoutly religious people often suffered from anxiety, emotional distress, hallucinations, and paranoia. The study stated that those who perceived God as punitive was directly related to their poorer health, while those who viewed God as benevolent did not suffer as many mental problems. The religious views of both groups often resulted in them being disconnected from reality.

Dr. Lillian Andrews, professor of psychology, stated, "Every year thousands of people die after refusing life-saving treatment on religious grounds. Even when being told 'you will die without this treatment' patients reject the idea and believe that their God will still save them. Those lives could be saved simply by classifying those people as mentally unfit for decision making."

That is a remarkable statement. Lives being 'saved' by taking away the ability to make a decision. Salvation, 'saving' you, by declaring that you are mentally ill, because you have a particular belief in God, even one that does not render you a harm or liability to anyone else. As I will show later, this is eugenics and once you start to decide who should and who should not be treated and how they should be treated (without their consent), it is not long before you are at the gates of a death camp.

Is someone who has an above average ability or a below average ability, in for example mathematics, in need of saving? As we shall see when we move into the realm of the mind, there are those who think that "Mathematics disorder" requires specialist treatment. When it comes to issues of mental health, what is 'normal' or socially acceptable is being defined by people who

think that they can understand and can see into the human mind. They are the new guardians of morality, the high priests of society.

My opinion is that the rise of psychiatry has the same function as the old priesthoods of Christendom. They existed not to cure the souls but to control them and save them. They take people into their confessionals and profess to give them cures for their sins and ills. They give them happy pills, comforting words, a chemical 'hail Mary', not a cure. People become more enslaved rather than freed as a result. The old priests took men away from God and Christ and placed the Institution of 'man's church' in their place. The modern priests of Psychiatry do the same. As I will show, they define a new 'normality', they define the disorders and prescribe the treatment. This is satanic, the propagation of lies from the liar who lied at the beginning. They tell us, like the devil, that we will not die but life will get better, if we accept their lies.

The following quote is often attributed to Joseph Goebbels, possibly incorrectly but the point is well made. "If you tell a lie big enough and keep repeating it, people will eventually come to believe it. The lie can be maintained only for such time as the State can shield the people from the political, economic and/or military consequences of the lie. It thus becomes vitally important for the State to use all of its powers to repress dissent, for the truth is the mortal enemy of the lie, and thus by extension, the truth is the greatest enemy of the State." You will have to judge for yourself whether psychiatry is a modern lie.

I wrote to an attorney who is involved in Psychiatric Rights. I asked him if he had any evidence for psychiatrists curing anybody. This was his reply:

"I rarely see psychiatric cure rates. It is impossible to be cured of an illness that doesn't actually exist. Mental illness is a value judgment about a person's mentality rather than a real illness. In psychiatry, cure or improvement rates would be subjective and unreliable and largely meaningless." (Wayne Ramsay. The author is a volunteer (pro bono) attorney for the Law Project for Psychiatric Rights (psychrights.org).

You may wish to consider the following before moving on:,

- 1. Show that 'so called' psychological disorders have a basis in physiology
- 2. See if your can find out what the cure rates are for psychiatric treatments?

We shall now examine this subject of mental healing in more detail.

31. What is mental health?

We have seen in Scripture that many physical illnesses are demonic in origin. I will also suggest that many problems with the mind are also demonic. In fact, I will go as far as to say that the 'mind' is the battleground where satan fights to destroy the vestiges of the image of God. In order to do that dehumanising work, the devil has assembled an army of experts to provide any solution to problems of the mind that does not involve the Creator. What I will show is that the subject of mental health is one where the 'experts' base their diagnoses on opinion rather than scientific fact.

"We do not believe any group of men adequate enough or wise enough to operate without scrutiny or without criticism. We know that the only way to avoid error is to detect it, that the only way to detect it is to be free to inquire. We know that in secrecy error undetected will flourish and subvert". – J Robert Oppenheimer.

Did Jesus deal with problems of the human mind? I believe and will show that He did. Can the humanist psychiatrists really detect the causes and cures for all the problems of the mind? I do not believe that they can.

I will attempt to offer a Christian perspective on the subject since we are studying 'Jesus the Healer'. What we mean by 'mental health' will require definition because when we start to use the term 'mental illness' in connection with 'mental health', do we mean that the 'mental health' is affected by an organic, physical, identifiable disease? Can we detect it with a laboratory test?

Here is a broad definition,

"A mental disorder (also called a mental illness, or psychiatric disorder) is a diagnosis, most often by a psychiatrist, of a behavioural or mental pattern that may cause suffering or a poor ability to function in life. Such features may be persistent, relapsing and remitting, or occur as a single episode".

What causes these is the quest of the healer and there is divided opinion about causation. Although the exact cause of most mental illnesses is not known, it is becoming clear through research that many of these conditions may be caused by a combination of biological, psychological, and environmental factors. However, if you examine a dead body, you will find physiological indicators of disease (cancers, diabetes, tuberculosis etc) but if you look in a cadaver for 'mental illness', you will find next to nothing physiologically. Mental illnesses are indicated by behaviour which is interpreted by a so called expert..

I am not saying that what we might call 'mental illness' are not real problems causing discomfort and distress to the individual. They are. What I am saying is that the causes and treatments are not well understood and that the authoritative approach of psychiatrists is based upon opinion, not biological, physiological factors.

There are also other factors that we must remember as Christians, when considering the state of man's mind, which I will iterate here and reiterate again as necessary. As Christians, we must never lose sight of the state of humanity as revealed by our Creator Christ. I remind us of this because we are different from the rest of humanity who does not have Christ as Saviour. We have a different mindset, we have the mind of Christ and the unbeliever does not. 1Co 2:16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

- 1. Mankind is **alienated** from the Creator by sin.
- 2. That alienation has an effect upon what we call the mind or reasoning process, *Col 1:21 And* you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled
- 3. In that state of alienation, mankind cannot understand God, 1Co 2:14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

- 4. Mankind is controlled by evil until Christ redeems him, *Eph 2:1* And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; *Eph 2:2* Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:
- 5. These people are called 'wicked' and a consequence of this is that they will not have peace. Isa 57:20 But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. Isa 57:21 **There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked**.
- 6. Christ enters our lives to renew our minds, Rom 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but **be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind**, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.
- 7. The Christian has changed his allegiance from satan to Christ. He is in another camp.

From these observations we may suggest:

- 1. There are two classes of mankind. The dead in sin and the living in Christ.
- 2. Those in sin will never be able to understand, that the problems facing mankind have spiritual origins. What some may observe as a 'mental illness' may be a consequence of this.
- 3. Many problems of the 'mind' are the consequence of alienation from God.
- 4. 'Mental' problems may be difficult to understand simply because they are spiritual and have no physiological basis.
- 5. Christians are continually renewing their mind to prove in their lives what God wants of them. It would follow that if Christians disobeyed this, they would have problems of the mind and of the body.
- 6. Mental problems that face the unbeliever will be different to those that may happen to a believer, because we are going in different directions.

May I remind us again that from a biblical perspective, we must also take into account other causes of 'mental dosorders', such as God's judgement upon a sinful behaviour and demonization, not popular in the modern humanist society. Our study will also look at how Jesus deals with people's problems that are not physical, but in personal attitudes, "that may cause suffering or a poor ability to function in life". Problems such as fear, anxiety, sorrow, grief, loneliness, anger, resentment, hatred, unhealthy obsessions, lust can all reduce functionality.

We see this in the life of Amnon who was besotted and preoccupied with his half sister. 2Sa 13:1 David had a beautiful daughter named Tamar, who was the sister of Absalom. She was also the half sister of Amnon, who fell in love with her. 2Sa 13:2 But Tamar was a virgin, and Amnon could not think of a way to be alone with her. He was so upset about it that he made himself sick. CEV. He ended up raping her and eventually, he was murdered because of this. We see anger in the life of Cain, Gen 4:5 But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. This led to murder. We see jealousy in the life of Asaph that nearly caused his downfall, Psa 73:2 But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. Psa 73:3 For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. This was resolved when he saw the outcome from God's perspective.

Problems of the mind may be temporary and short lived or they may go on for years. Jacob lived in fear of his brother for years after he cheated him, *Gen 32:6 And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with*

him. Gen 32:7 Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed: and he divided the people that was with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels, into two bands; Jacob further suffered the loss of his son Joseph, Gen 37:35 And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him. So deep was the hurt that it would not leave Jacob and what we might ask was wrong with that? If he did not want comforting, that was his choice. Was it a case for curing or a mark of love for the lost? We live in an age where everything must be cured rather than endured.

Today, Jacob would be described as having a mental disorder, according the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, the 'Bible' of psychiatrists (see DSM-4):

Bereavement: This category can be used when the focus of clinical attention is a reaction to the death of a loved one. As part of their reaction to the loss, some grieving individuals present with symptoms characteristic of a Major Depressive Episode (e.g., feelings of sadness and associated symptoms such as insomnia, poor appetite, and weight loss). The bereaved individual typically regards the depressed mood as "normal," although the person may seek professional help for relief of associated symptoms such as insomnia or anorexia. The duration and expression of "normal" bereavement vary considerably among different cultural groups. The diagnosis of Major Depressive Disorder is generally not given unless the symptoms are still present 2 months after the loss. However, the presence of certain symptoms that are not characteristic of a "normal" grief reaction may be helpful in differentiating bereavement from a Major Depressive Episode.

The latest diagnostic manual DSM-5 changes the diagnosis of Major Depressive Episode to what is now termed "Persistent Complex Bereavement Disorder":

.....is diagnosed only if at least 12 months, (6 months in children) have elapsed since the death of someone with whom the bereaved had a close relationship. This timeframe discriminates normal grief from persistent grief.

These Psychiatrists change their minds as they play god, yet who but God has the right to decide what is and what is not appropriate mourning. The Bible does not lay down the law for a period of mourning with a sharp cut off. It varies between individuals and has a lot to do with the relationship that has been severed. Mourning in bereavement is a perfectly normal and good response to loss.

What we can conclude from the biblical examples above is that the thoughts that arose in the minds of the individuals issued in behaviour that was sinful, like the sin of lust (Amnon), the sin of self-righteousness (Cain), the sin of ignorance (Asaph) and the sin of someone else (Jacob's sons). It further remains to be seen, whether mental health issues are in all cases, a result of sinful attitudes (always present in unbelievers) or other organic factors. Factors such as the blasting rod that went through Phineas Gage's head.

The accident happened on September 13, 1848. Gage, a foreman at a railroad construction site, absentmindedly pounded his tamping rod into a hole filled with blasting powder. The explosives blew the 43-inch-long rod upward and completely through Gage's head, landing with a thud about 30 yards away. Gage was taken to the town doctor, John Harlow, who plugged the holes in Gage's

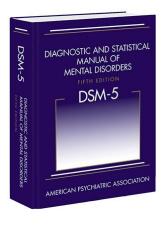
skull and kept him under observation. Amazingly, he was alive, fully conscious, and except for the loss of one eye, experienced no lasting physical handicaps. He was, however, "mentally greatly changed," as noted on a memorial plaque. "Once an efficient and capable foreman, he was now increasingly erratic, irritable, and profane."

According to the World Health Organisation, one in four people in the world will be affected by mental or neurological disorders at some point in their lives. Around 450 million people currently suffer from such conditions, placing mental disorders among the leading causes of ill-health and disability worldwide. There are new causes of mental disorders so we are told and a recent news article reported "Sinful sex will fry your brain". Christianity Today (July 2016) reported:

Utah became the first state to declare pornography a public health crisis, calling on businesses and educators to protect children from it. Around the same time, a Time Magazine cover story reported that porn causes erectile dysfunction in young men whose minds have marinated in X-rated clips from the time they were teenagers.

Pornography trains the user to seek more extreme sexual experiences to receive the same satisfying flood of dopamine. It's what researchers call the Coolidge effect—the prospect of a new sexual partner excites males (and sometimes females) so much that normal sexual activity becomes boring by comparison.

Mental disorders are often treated with drugs. The UK now has the seventh highest prescribing rate for antidepressants in the Western world⁷³, separate figures show, with around four million Britons taking them each year, twice as many as a decade ago. In 2014, a total of 56 million prescriptions for antidepressants were issued, official figures show. Depression (including postnatal depression) was the most common diagnosed mental illness, with 19 per cent saying they had received this diagnosis at some time. More women than men have suffered depression, 24 per cent compared to 13 per cent of men. While antidepressants can treat the symptoms of depression, they do not address its causes and they may have other adverse effects. This is why they're usually used in combination with therapy to treat more severe depression or other mental health conditions caused by emotional distress.



Is the world in the grip of a rising tide of mental disorders or is the world in the grip of a group of so called 'experts' who are inventing disorders with a drugs industry ready to supply medication, funded by health insurance? The psychiatrists invent the disorders, the drug industry provides the 'cures' and the health insurance industry (you) pays. The DSM⁷⁴ manual, published by the American Psychiatric Association, details the diagnostic criteria for each and every psychiatric disorder, many of which have pharmacological treatments. After the 1994 release of DSM-4, the APA instituted a policy requiring expert advisors to disclose drug industry ties. But the move toward transparency did little to cut down on conflicts, with nearly 70 percent of the latest DSM-5 task

 $[\]frac{\text{73}}{\text{http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/nhs/12101811/Almost-half-of-adults-have-suffered-mental-illness-NHS-stats-suggest.html}$

⁷⁴ Quote: "The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, published by the American Psychiatric Association, offers a common language and standard criteria for the classification of mental disorders"

force members reporting financial relationships with pharmaceutical companies -- up from 57 percent for DSM-4⁷⁵.

Something is wrong in our perceptions or expectations of life, something so wrong that we need to be sedated to be able to endure it. Is this in the main a consequence of a Godless, Christless life? Are we saying that if you become a believer in Christ, saved by grace, that you will not have any problems? God never promised that. The great apostle Paul shows us that being a Christian can be tough. 2Co 4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. 2Co 4:8 We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; 2Co 4:9 Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; 2Co 4:10 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. I detect in Paul's language that the jar is not half empty, even if it is only half full. He is positive in the face of adversity. He is so, I believe, because he was told that was the reality of a Christian life. Act 9:16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

You will also recall that our Lord was in terrible anxiety in the garden of Gethsemane. Luk 22:43 And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. Luk 22:44 And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. Luk 22:45 And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples. In His humanity Christ experienced what we experience, joy, sorrow, anxiety, anger, pain emotions common to man and not sinful per se. They did not however control His life such that He was perpetually 'angry'. He was master of His emotions and they were not the master of Him.

Madness is often what we might have associated with 'mental illness' in the past. It is as old as history itself. In order to preserve his life, David pretends to be mad, not that king Achish lacked madmen. 1Sa 21:13 And he changed his behaviour before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands, and scrabbled on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon his beard. 1Sa 21:14 Then said Achish unto his servants, Lo, ye see the man is mad: wherefore then have ye brought him to me? 1Sa 21:15 Have I need of mad men, that ye have brought this fellow to play the mad man in my presence? shall this fellow come into my house?

Madness was a punishment upon Israel if they forsook the Law, Deu 28:28 The LORD shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart: It was apparent in the blind hatred of Jesus accusers, Luk 6:11 And they were filled with madness; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus. The symptoms of madness were known to Solomon, who observed its strange behaviour and commented, Pro 26:17 He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears. Pro 26:18 As a mad man who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death. Nebuchadnezzar appeared to have temporary madness, what some would call a psychotic episode, Dan 4:33 The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws. Dan 4:34 And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me,

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⁷⁵ http://abcnews.go.com/Health/MindMoodNews/dsm-fire-financial-conflicts/story?id=15909673

and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation:

How did people deal with mental health in the past?⁷⁶ In many cultures, Islamic and Judaeo-Christian, provision was made for these souls. In England, one of the most famous was Bethlehem which was on the site of the present Imperial War Museum.

The Bethlem Asylum (Bedlam): When Henry VIII dissolved the religious orders, he seized the Bethlem Hospital in London, England's only asylum for the mentally ill. However, shortly before he died in 1547 he transferred its control to the Corporation of London. It then became a civic rather than a religious institution.

In the eyes of the law, mentally ill people lacked the capacity to reason, so a Court of Wards would hand the responsibility for their affairs to someone else. King James I (1603-1625) instructed the court that 'lunatics be freely committed to their best and nearest friends, that can receive no benefit by their death.' The care of the mentally ill was essentially a domestic matter and on the whole, it seems that people were not exploited by the system.

Mental health and illness has never been the exclusive domain of medicine. The very idea of 'mental illness' raises many broader questions. What behaviour is 'normal'? What is being 'rational'? Opinions have always differed about the best way to define and treat mental health⁷⁷. Psychiatry⁷⁸ has never established the cause of any "mental disorders." Leading psychiatric agencies such as the World Psychiatric Association and the U.S. National Institute of Mental Health admit that psychiatrists do not know the causes or cures for any mental disorder or what their "treatments" specifically do to the patient. They have only theories and conflicting opinions about their diagnoses and methods, and are lacking any scientific basis for these. As a past president of the World Psychiatric Association stated, "The time when psychiatrists considered that they could cure the mentally ill is gone. In the future, the mentally ill have to learn to live with their illness."

32. Blame shifting

Let me introduce some definitions as we navigate our way through the subject of psychiatry or 'soul healing'.

Psychiatrists are medical doctors (MDs) who graduate from medical school, have a year of medical internship, and have 3 years of residency in the assessment and treatment of mental health disorders. Psychologists have a doctoral degree in an area of psychology, the study of the mind and human behaviour.

⁷⁶ https://historicengland.org.uk/research/inclusive-heritage/disability-history/1485-1660/mental-illness-in-the-16th-and-17th-centuries/

⁷⁷ http://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/broughttolife/themes/menalhealthandillness

⁷⁸ Published by Citizens Commission on Human Rights "THE BRUTAL REALITY" Report and recommendations on the destructive practices of electroshock and psychosurgery.

Here is one definition of mental health⁷⁹:

Mental health includes our emotional, **psychological**, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.

Over the course of your life, if you experience mental health problems, your thinking, mood, and behaviour could be affected. Many factors contribute to mental health problems, including:

- Biological factors, wound trauma
- Life experiences, such as trauma or abuse
- Family history of mental health problems

The term 'psychological' slipped in there. What is meant by that? Here is an explanation from 'Psychology Today'⁸⁰:

It's not easy to determine what a psychological disorder is. The DSM-4⁸¹ explains, "...the concept of mental disorder (**like many other concepts in medicine and science**) lacks a consistent operational definition that covers all situations."

"A mental disorder is a clinically significant behavioural or psychological syndrome or pattern that occurs in an individual and that is associated with present distress or disability or with a significantly increased risk of suffering death, pain, disability, or an important loss of freedom."

Did you see how 'mental disorder' is put on the same platform as medicine and science, 'like many other concepts in medicine and science'? We shall have to prove that. The definition changed in the updated version, DSM-5:

"A mental disorder is a syndrome characterized by clinically significant disturbance in an individual's cognition, emotion regulation, or behaviour that reflects a dysfunction in the psychological, biological, or developmental processes underlying mental functioning. Mental disorders are usually associated with significant distress in social, occupational, or other important activities. An expectable or culturally approved response to a common stressor or loss, such as the death of a loved one, is not a mental disorder. Socially deviant behaviour (e.g., political, religious, or sexual) and conflicts that are primarily between the individual and society are not mental disorders unless the deviance or conflict results from a dysfunction in the individual, as described above."

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⁷⁹ https://www.mentalh<u>ealth.gov/basics/what-is-mental-health/</u>

https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-mysteries-love/201503/what-is-psychological-disorder

⁸¹ DSM-IV Codes are the classification found in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th Edition, Text Revision, also known as DSM-IV-TR, a manual published by the American Psychiatric Association (APA) that includes all currently recognized mental health disorders.

We shall have to examine that other term that also slipped in, the term 'illness', as in mental illness. Illness is defined as "a specific condition that prevents your body or mind from working normally". Does this mean that illness of the mind has a physical or organic origin?

I read this in the news recently:

An A&E doctor who secretly filmed patients has been cleared of sexual motivated behaviour after insisting he only spied on women and children because he has Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD). Dr A*** B***, was handed a suspended jail term in 2013 for outraging public decency when he admitted filming up a woman's skirt in a Halfords store.

He was also charged with voyeurism offences, including the covert filming of the patients, two clothed nurses and children getting changed at a swimming baths. But the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) offered no evidence against those matters when medical experts agreed the doctor was suffering at the time from a form of obsessive compulsive disorder. A Medical Practitioners Tribunal Service hearing in Manchester has now struck B*** off the medical register for misconduct - but ruled he was not guilty of sexually motivated conduct after accepting the expert (sic!) evidence.

Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)82:

...... is a mental health condition where a person has obsessive thoughts and compulsive activity. An obsession is an unwanted and unpleasant thought, image or urge that repeatedly enters a person's mind, causing feelings of anxiety, disgust or unease. A compulsion is a repetitive behaviour or mental act that someone feels they need to carry out to try to temporarily relieve the unpleasant feelings brought on by the obsessive thought.

For example, someone with a fear of their house being burgled may feel they need to check all the windows and doors are locked several times before they can leave the house.

We might say that Amnon was 'obsessed' with his sister but that did not make his action excusable. The doctor with a proclivity for looking up ladies skirts, appears to have found an excuse because although he did it, it was a coping mechanism for his OCD. It seems that if you can find a 'mental' excuse, then what you do absolves you from guilt. "It wasn't me your Honour, it was the mental illness that did it".

It is perhaps worth noting that voyeurism is not denounced as a sin in the Bible, although what is probably closely associated with voyeurism, lust, is. Psychology has relabelled 'lust' and enabled it to become a mental disorder not a sin. When we covered the subject of Pornography, we saw that many people were disgusted at themselves for what they did but they continued to do it. Lusting after a woman is no different from committing the physical act of fornication. It has a consequence and that is what God will punish, that is, if the person does not repent and change their behaviour.

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⁸² http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/<u>Obsessive-compulsive-disorder/Pages/Introduction.aspx</u>

What has happened is this. The action of a person is excused because he is deemed not responsible for what he did, because he was a victim of an illness. What motivated him they say, his OCD, was the problem, not what he did. Further, the fact that there were victims of his who may have suffered in various ways, because of his behaviour, are discounted by the excuse of a 'behavioural aberration'.

Let us observe that God does not just judge you on your motivation but also upon what you did. Peter seems motivated by a good thought, saving Jesus, but it was a sin. The motive was wrong and it was satanic. Mat 16:22 And having taken Him near, Peter began to rebuke Him, saying, God be gracious to You, Lord; this shall never be to You. Mat 16:23 But turning He said to Peter, Go behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you do not think of the things of God, but the things of men. LITV. Peter did not have his mind on the things of God. What Peter said and what he did was sinful.

Men are finally judged by what they do in life, Rev 20:12 I also saw all the dead people standing in front of that throne. Every one of them was there, no matter who they had once been. Several books were opened, and then the book of life was opened. The dead were judged by what those books said they had done. CEV. There are no character witnesses at the grand assize, no smart doctors to give medical excuses, no psychiatrists offering advice, in short no excuses. You either did something that was wrong or you did not. Why you did it is immaterial at the Grand Assize. Of course, we know that sin set in train the decline of man, but sin is not on trial. Sin was killed at the cross and now it remains for those who did not receive forgiveness, to bear the consequences of their actions themselves.

The way that we deal with sin today is that we excuse it as something beyond our control. Likewise, with much behaviour, we excuse it as being beyond the control of the perpetrator. We put the causes out of their control and outside of themselves, such that they are not responsible. They are victims.

As Christians, however sympathetic we may be to a person who has had a hard and troubled upbringing, we cannot lessen the gravity of their actions by making excuses. Yes, they may be ignorant of God's laws but ignorance does not excuse guilt. There are lots of people who have terrible upbringings and turn out to be role models for society, great achievers and highly successful.

Botanist and inventor George Washington Carver was one of many children born to Mary and Giles, an enslaved couple owned by Moses Carver. He was born during the Civil War years, most likely in 1864. A week after his birth, George was kidnapped along with his sister and mother from the Carver farm by raiders from the neighbouring state of Arkansas. The three were sold in Kentucky, and among them only the infant George was located by an agent of Moses Carver and returned to Missouri.

The conclusion of the Civil War in 1865 brought the end of slavery in Missouri. Moses Carver and his wife, Susan, decided to keep George and his brother James at their home after that time, raising and educating the two boys. Susan Carver taught George to read and write, since no local school would accept black students at the time.

The search for knowledge would remain a driving force for the rest of George's life. As a young man, he left the Carver home to travel to a school for black children 10 miles away. It was at this point that the boy, who had always identified himself as "Carver's George", first came to be known as "George Carver." Carver attended a series of schools before receiving his diploma at Minneapolis High School in Minneapolis, Kansas.

Accepted to Highland College in Highland, Kansas, Carver was denied admittance once college administrators learned of his race. Instead of attending classes, he homesteaded a claim, where he conducted biological experiments and compiled a geological collection. While interested in science, Carver was also interested in the arts. In 1890, he began studying art and music at Simpson College in Iowa, developing his painting and drawing skills through sketches of botanical samples. His obvious aptitude for drawing the natural world prompted a teacher to suggest that Carver enrol in the botany program at the Iowa State Agricultural College.

Carver moved to Ames and began his botanical studies the following year as the first black student at Iowa State. Carver excelled in his studies. Upon completion of his Bachelor of Science degree, Carver's professors Joseph Budd and Louis Pammel persuaded him to stay on for a master's degree. His graduate studies included intensive work in plant pathology at the Iowa Experiment Station. In these years, Carver established his reputation as a brilliant botanist and began the work that he would pursue for the remainder of his career.

Carver went on to become one of the most prominent scientists and inventors of his time, as well as a teacher at the Tuskegee Institute. Carver devised over 100 products using one major crop—the peanut—including dyes, plastics and gasoline. He died in 1943.

Frugal in finance and humble in character, Carver was undoubtedly a deeply devoted Christian. He attributed inspiration of his work to God, and his studies of nature convinced him of the existence and benevolence of the Creator: "Never since have I been without this consciousness of the Creator speaking to me....The out of doors has been to me more and more a great cathedral in which God could be continuously spoken to and heard from."

Carver's upbringing had its share of trauma, abuse, and harshness but it did not turn him into a murderer or deviant or one who blamed others for his problems.

This poem by Anna Russell sums up the issue.

I went to my psychiatrist to be psychoanalyzed, To find out why I killed the cat and blacked my husband's eyes.

He laid me on a downy couch to see what he could find, And here is what he dredged up from my subconscious mind:

When I was one. my mommie hid my dolly in a trunk, And so it follows naturally that I am always drunk.

When I was two, I saw my father kiss the maid one day. And that is why I suffer now from kleptomania.

At three. I had the feeling of ambivalence toward my brothers, And so it follows naturally I poison all my lovers.

But I am happy; now I've learned the lesson this has taught: That everything I do that's wrong is someone else's fault.

That is the way the world and the way that psychiatry views the human condition. It is the continuing search for reasons to explain the way we are, without involving us personally in our own behaviour. Ways to explain the inhumanity of man, the selfishness of man, the anger of man, the deceit of man, without any reference to a Creator. I read an article recently on Reinhard Heydrich, the Nazi 'butcher of Prague', suggesting that he was at heart a very sensitive and cultured man, led astray by ambition and his peers. History is beginning to reinstate its villains.

There is a warning here to parents who will find excuses for their children, perhaps because bad behaviour reflects upon their parenting or because they are protective of their bad behaviour. Eli was such a parent. 1Sa 2:12 Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the LORD. Eli was not a faithful Priest, 1Sa 2:34 And this shall be a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they shall die both of them. 1Sa 2:35 And I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever.

Perhaps if Eli had disciplined his sons, he would not have suffered himself but as we know, it becomes the death of him. He is also responsible for the death of his sons. If he had punished them as young men, God would not have had to punish them. When Eli sees what his sons do, how they steal God's portion of the sacrifice and as they fornicate with the women, he asks "Why?" 1Sa 2:23 And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people. That is not what he should have asked. It should have been obvious that the sons were wicked, sinful, disobedient men. The "why?" was both known to Eli and his sons.

The sons and the father were not prepared to obey the Lord. The issue was ultimately "what" these sons had done and what they needed to do to make it right. In the event, both the sons and the father met their end and the family lineage was wiped out. 1Sa 3:11 And the LORD said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. Sa 3:12 In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end. 1Sa 3:13 For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. 1Sa 3:14 And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever.

God will heal and restore or He will purge.

The day of Judgement is not a day of excuses. The universal advocate, Jesus Christ, will have completed His advocacy. The last judgement is not a trial, a grand assize, because that judgement has already happened. Joh 3:18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Judgement for sin is past for the Saints, Rom 8:1 There is then no dampnation to them which are in Christe Iesu, which walke not after the fleshe, but after the spirite. Bishops Bible.

Christ has already defended His people before God and succeeded. 1Jn 2:1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 1Jn 2:2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. The unbelieving sinner has no advocate, no representation before his Creator.

In a similar vein, Mar 10:20 And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. Mar 10:21 Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me. Mar 10:22 And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions. Jesus knew what the problem was and He did not ask why the man's countenance fell, why he became gloomy, why he became sad. Jesus knew what the problem was and so did the man. The man was in love with his lifestyle of the rich and famous. His lifestyle defined him. He desperately wanted Jesus' approval but even more desperately he clung on to the things that he loved more.

I imagine if this had happened today, Jesus would have been condemned for being judgemental. It was Jesus who was wrong because He had sent the man into a spiral of depression. Surely the rich man could have a relationship with God and have his wealth. Surely he could have any attitude and behaviour and have a relationship with God. Perhaps he could be an adulterer, a homosexualist, a thief or even a murderer. After all, according to the way people are dealt with today, the problems of life are the fault of others, as we have observed earlier. Like that perverted doctor who was a 'peeping tom', the excuse was that it was a coping mechanism. Our love of money helps us cope with life, being able to sin with impunity helps us to cope with life, by which we mean, to avoid the guilt of our actions.

Healing problem attitudes today is a matter of finding a culprit that is not the person being treated. In Jesus day, the finger pointed at the heart. You had to face your sin and deal with it, not pass on the blame. Although we may not believe it today, that rule still holds true with the Lord.

33. The mind changers

Our subject is highly topical.

"The scale⁸³ of the growing crisis in young people's mental wellbeing is laid bare with the disclosure that 235,189 people aged 18 and under get specialist care, according to data covering 60% of mental health trusts in England". "Mental ill health⁸⁴ in the workplace is a growing issue with one in six working age adults experiencing depression, anxiety or stress-related issues at any one time. With World Mental Health Day on 10th October, Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) England is calling on

^{83 3&}lt;sup>rd</sup> October 2016 Guardian

⁸⁴ 5th October 2016 HR Review

employers to find out how they can support the mental wellbeing of their staff." "The total number⁸⁵ of cases of work related stress, depression or anxiety in 2014/15 was 440,000 cases, a prevalence rate of 1380 per 100,000 workers".

We have seen that the humanist mind therapies, psychiatry, try to apportion blame to factors outside of the individual. Our problems and our perceptions are the fault of other influences that impact on our lives, not things that are wrong within us. This humanist approach to problem solving occurs early on in the Bible. We might say of Cain that he had an anger management issues, *Gen 4:5 But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. Gen 4:6 And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?* Cain's rejection sparked anger. From Cain's point of view, the problem was Abel, the problem was not in Cain's attitude to righteousness, it was his brother Abel that was at fault and to an extent, the Creator for not being favourable to his sinful efforts to sacrifice to the Creator.

The solution to Cain's anger, in his own perception, was to remove the external problem, kill Abel and everything would be right. 1Jn 3:11 For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. 1Jn 3:12 Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. Anger and murder did not solve Cain's problem, it compounded it. Gen 4:11 And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; Gen 4:12 When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth. Let us never forget that God is in control and will inflict His own judgements even if we do not uphold His word.

Cain's anger could have been dealt with, removed and his relationship to his Maker restored, if he had only acknowledged his sin. He could have sought repentance and reconciliation but he chose a route which made his sin and suffering worse. He chose man's way. Perhaps if it had happened today he would also have been given a course of antidepressants! It is no solution, only a mask.

It is important for us to understand how people with supposed mental illnesses are treated and in order to do this, we need to understand the sources of the treatment and who was responsible for developing the treatments. I make no apology for starting with the Lord Jesus Christ. He, after all is the Creator of the mind and what He has said about it is, that it needs transforming. Rom 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. That verse clearly states that our world view must change and that our mental faculties, our mind must be renewed. It is as the text says, a metamorphosis. It is not an option for some people, it is necessary for ALL men especially Christians. We must therefore, as Christians, agree that all humanity is gripped by a mental disorder. Disordered minds need ordering. The question is how?

Let me make it clear that any attempt to renew the mind to its original specification will fail without the application by the Holy Spirit of the work of Christ. Man cannot and never could save himself or perfect himself. Man could never get a relationship with his Creator without the application of Christ's forgiveness in his life. Rom 3:9 What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; Rom 3:10 As it is written,

⁸⁵ http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/causdis/stress/

There is none righteous, no, not one: Rom 3:11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. Rom 3:12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, **no, not one**. You cannot get right with God by works, Gal 2:16 Knowing that a man is **not justified by the works of the law**, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

Once in that relationship with Christ we are under daily therapy. 2Co 3:18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. Change is not effected by a mask we wear on Sundays or religious occasions. Change is not an occasional act of soul searching. It is a lifestyle. Paul describes the change like this, Eph 4:23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; Eph 4:24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Eph 4:25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.

It is a spiritual transformation but does that mean that we will not suffer from any anxieties, fears, psychoses, trauma if we become a Christian. What does happen as part of Jesus' therapy is that we develop a whole new range of attitudes as we transform. We put off things and we replace them with things to put on. We are changed to cope with this evil world.

- Eph 4:22 That ye **put off** concerning the former conversation(conduct) the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; Eph 4:23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; Eph 4:24 And that ye **put on** the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Eph 4:25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. Eph 4:26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Eph 4:27 Neither give place to the devil.
- Col 3:8 But now ye also **put off** all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Col 3:9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have **put off** the old man with his deeds; Col 3:10 And have **put on** the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:........... Col 3:12 **Put on** therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Col 3:13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. Col 3:14 And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. Col 3:15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

The responsibility is ours to do but the power comes from the Holy Spirit. All that the 'old man' was led to sin, all that the old man did was the works of his flesh. The 'new man' is endowed with spiritual qualities as fruit grows on a tree.

• Gal 5:19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Gal 5:20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Gal 5:21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. Gal 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is

- love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Gal 5:23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.
- Eph 5:9 (For **the fruit of the Spirit** is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Eph 5:10 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. Eph 5:11 And have no fellowship with the **unfruitful works of darkness**, but rather reprove them.

Christ brings men back to their original design, *Col 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him*: Christ's therapy is directed towards a design and purpose. It has a standard, a goal, a definition, and a method to achieve it.

Modern mind therapies discount personal sin as the cause of mental problems and being humanist and atheist, they have no goal that is meaningful, in their Universe that is without meaning. They are products of the philosophy of the sinful mind. The natural man as he is called can have no grasp of the Divine and no grasp of his own nature, 1Co 2:14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. The mind that is supposedly directed to solving other people's problems is at enmity with God. Rom 8:7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. Rom 8:8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

One of the most (in)famous psychotherapists was Sigmund Freud⁸⁶. Here is a summary of some of his thoughts:

Freud was convinced that God did not exist. But if atheism is true, then why do so many people believe in God? Freud tried to answer this question. Freud suggested that primitive man felt extremely threatened by nature (due to storms, floods, earthquakes, diseases, and ultimately death). Man had no control over nature. He was totally helpless in this regard. Primitive man was completely at the mercy of nature. There was nowhere man could turn for help. Freud theorised that primitive men therefore decided to personalise nature. In this way, man could attempt to plead with or appease nature. Imagining nature to be a personal being enabled man to offer sacrifices to nature in hope that nature would be kind to him in return.

Freud's speculation did not stop there. He also promoted another theory of early human society. He assumed that originally mankind banded together in small groups. These clans consisted of a male, his several wives, and their offspring. Freud believed that, early in life, male children desired to have sex with their mothers. They therefore became extremely jealous of their father. Though they loved their father since he was their protector, they began to hate him due to their jealousy. Eventually, they banded together and murdered their father. After the murder, they ate the flesh of their father in a ritual meal. Soon, the male children were overcome with feelings of guilt. As a result, they deified the father image and began offering sacrifices to him as a god.

Freud taught that God is nothing but a product of man's imagination. God did not create man. Instead, man created God. Man personalized nature due to his fear of nature. The guilt he felt for murdering his father also caused him to project the father image onto

⁸⁶ http://instituteofbiblicaldefense.com/tag/freud/

this personalized nature. In this way, reasoned Freud, the belief in the Father-God was originated by man's wishful thinking.

This highly speculative theory does not do justice to mankind's universal thirst for God. This theory appears to be "wishful thinking" on the part of Freud.

What Freud did was to develop an alternative world view to the Christian world view. It was not empirical, data led, founded on the facts of human anatomy and known disease but philosophical. You may argue but then, so is Christianity, but I and many Christians will disagree with that. We have put God's word to the test and found that it does exactly what it says in the book.

I find it hard to take the words of Freud as serious science when he propounds a theory of 'penis envy', that is the supposed envy of the male's possession of a penis, suggested to account for some aspects of female behaviour (notably the castration complex). The scientific evidence would be interesting if ever it existed but here is a modern comment⁸⁷:

"The primary trouble with Freud is that, while his ideas appear intriguing and even common-sensical, there's very little empirical evidence to back them up. Modern psychology has produced very little to substantiate many of his claims.

For instance, there's no scientific evidence in support of the idea that boys lust after their mothers and hate their fathers. He was totally, utterly wrong about gender. And his notion of "penis envy" is now both laughable and tragic.

There's no proof of the id, ego, or superego. There's also no evidence to support the notion that human development proceeds through oral, anal, phallic, and genital stages. Nor that the interference, or arresting, of these stages leads to specific developmental manifestations.

Although boys are caught in the constant threat of castration, girls on the other hand are in this sense already castrated, and thus are faced with an irreparable damage — 'they feel seriously wronged ... and fall victim to "envy for the penis"'...Freud suggests that for women there are two possible ways out of penis envy — besides the more strenuous ways such as neurosis or 'masculinity complex' — one of them is a 'capacity to carry on an intellectual profession'...the other is having a baby. Both are thus substitutes for the penis."

If there is a justifiable ground for mental institutions, Freud would be the first inmate, more psycho than therapist. It further raises the questions as to how a person with such strange ideas can make anyone with a mental problem better. Where would these psychotherapists be directing those people?

Counselling & Psychotherapy – Theoretical Approaches: I do not intend to go in detail through the lives of the people who developed psychotherapy, I do not find their lives of value or an example to Christians. They are godless men. I will however quote from Dr E S Williams book, "Jesus or Therapy" for a compact summary. The "Dark Side of Christian Counselling" has a chapter on each of the so

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⁸⁷ http://iog.gizmodo.com/why-freud-still-matters-when-he-was-wrong-about-almost-1055800815

called 'giants' of psychotherapy, namely Sigmund Freud, Alfred Adler, Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers and Albert Ellis.

"Freud is the fountain-head of the psychotherapeutic movement. The unspoken motivation behind his Work was a passion to subvert the Gospel of Christ. He had a fascination with the occult that undoubtedly influenced his model of psychotherapy. At the centre of Freud's model lies the unconscious mind, over which we have no control, that is the driving force of human behaviour. His sinister theory placed enormous power in the hands of the psychotherapist who alone can open the door to our unconscious mind, interpret its contents and deliver us from its tyranny. But the claim that a psychotherapist can delve into the unconscious mind is contrary to Scripture, for God alone knows the mind of man, 2Ch 6:30 Then hear thou from heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and render unto every man according unto all his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou only knowest the hearts of the children of men:)

Alfred Adler was a humanist who supported the godless philosophy of Nietzsche. His idea of a 'fictional' final goal, developed during childhood, has been used by Christian counsellors to understand human behaviour.

In Maslow's worldview, the problem with man, who is basically good, is that all his needs have not been met. He claimed that we need healthy self-esteem to feel significant and secure. Salvation is through psychotherapy which develops our human potential and takes us to the fount of self-actualisation. Maslow was hostile to the Gospel and his peak experiences involved New Age thinking.

Carl Rogers rejected all moral authority other than his own experience. Like Maslow, denying the biblical doctrine of original sin and human depravity, he believed that human nature is essentially healthy and has the potential for personal growth in a counselling situation. He taught that healthy self-esteem is essential for psychological health. His client-centred counselling model is non-directive, non-judgemental, and empathic. Clients must be helped to express and trust their feelings so that they can do what 'feels' to be right in a particular situation. Rogers' emphasis on feelings is contrary to Scripture for 'a fool vents all his feelings, but a wise man holds them back' (Proverbs 29.11). His model is used by Christian counsellors to help a Woman decide Whether or not to have an abortion.

Ellis was a self-proclaimed atheist who despised devout Christians, referring to them as 'fanatical religionists'. In The Case Against Religion Ellis argues that 'if religion is defined as man's dependence on a power above and beyond the human, then, as a psychotherapist, I find it to be exceptionally pernicious. 'All true believers 'are distinctly disturbed, since they are obviously rigid, fanatic and dependent individuals'. In his view committed Christians are suffering with a form of mental illness. His rational emotive behaviour therapy helps Christians to change their core beliefs in order to behave in a more rational Way.

The teachings of these 'giants' of psychology are, according to Scripture, pure folly, for they disregard the spiritual dimension of life, deny the doctrine of original sin and reject the moral law of God. It is not difficult to see that the psychological speculations of these men are fundamentally opposed to the most basic doctrines of the Christian faith. Scripture says that unbelievers are darkened in their understanding, being alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to the hardness of their heart (Ephesians 4.18).

The common ground between these five men is that they were unbelievers who, in their lives and theories, rejected the God of Scripture. The god of this World had blinded *their minds* (2 Corinthians 4:4). But their theories are the foundation and pillars of 'psychological truth'. The Christian counselling movement is integrating into the church of Christ the psychological speculations that have come from the futile thinking of these godless men.

Scripture teaches that the problem of human behaviour lies in the heart of man — out of the heart comes all manner of sinful conduct, from sexual immorality, to deceit, theft, covetousness, pride and murder (Mark 7.20-23). Why have the 'giants' of psychology got it so wrong? The answer is — because their psychological theories are the product of minds darkened by unbelief. Their Worldly wisdom is foolishness in God's sight. Can their foolish 'wisdom' lead the church into yet more truth?"

For me, what is of great concern is that despite what Christianity says about the nature of man, it has no place in psychiatry. In fact, I will go further and say that many Christians neglect the Biblical teachings that change the mind and attitude in favour of humanistic philosophy.

In a prayer at the Lord's Table a few weeks ago, an observation was made, that many of our problems are down to our human selfishness. If that means our obsession with our own life, us as the focus of all around us, life having to mould itself to meet our needs and desires, then that is a great truth. We become victims of our own stupidity. For example, the man who had riches also had the sorrow and grief because he was covetous. *Mar 10:22 And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions*. Jesus did not enter into a protracted dialogue with the man, giving him further counselling. The man had a spiritual problem, he wanted eternal life and the simple cure was to take up his cross and follow Jesus. Consultation over.

I read this interesting comment on psychiatry:

"It's not a conversation, and it's not a debate. You are either treating their symptoms with medication, or guiding them to "treat" their own symptoms. Neither requires much talking. If the psychiatrist says more words than the patient, then the psychiatrist is the patient."

The point that I close with is that much of what we want curing is of our own making. We want curing of ourselves. Psychiatry tells us to look elsewhere, the Bible says look into your own heart.

34. Ideas have consequences

We saw in our last study that the ideas that were undergirding psychiatry were hostile to the Gospel of Christ. Ideas as we know, have consequences and the consequences of some of these ideas have been the destruction, not the healing of mankind, as we shall see. If psychiatry cannot remake man in its own image, it will destroy him.

We have already seen that disease is defined as "a disorder of structure or function in a human, animal, or plant, especially one that produces specific symptoms or that affects a specific location and is not simply a direct result of physical injury". The point that we have made is that a mental disorder does not always have a physiological cause. Physical illness refers to what a person has, mental illness refers to what a person does. This idea is at the heart of State control. When the experts decide that something is contrary to their world view, their beliefs, their politics, they will classify their opponent as mentally ill and in need of treatment.

"In the 1950's and 1960's the dissident movement (both political and religious) only increased its ranks. At first the communists (who claim to abide by their Constitution) tried to apply the law and many were sentenced with "Anti-Soviet Agitation and Propaganda". A church sermon could easily fall into this category even though Article 52 of the same Constitution guarantees "freedom of religion." Many of these dissidents turned to study law for use in self-defence. Undaunted by such a counter-attack, the Soviets pulled their own trump--of declaring such dissidents "insane". No longer were there needed the formalities of a courtroom trial. The signature of a psychiatrist was enough to lock someone up in an insane asylum (Psikhushka психу́шка) with no recourse to appeal."

"In the Soviet Union, psychiatric hospitals were often used by the authorities as prisons in order to isolate political prisoners from the rest of society, discredit their ideas, and break them physically and mentally; as such they were considered a form of torture. The official explanation was that no sane person would be against socialism."

We could change that a bit and say in our society the psychiatric mind set would tell us no sane person would be against psychiatric diagnoses, the DSM book, and what the psychiatrist says is the truth. No sane person would argue with the psychiatrist... But in the Soviet Union psychiatrists were used to suppress both religious and spiritual belief systems...

"The official Soviet psychiatric science came up with the definition of sluggish schizophrenia, a special form of the illness that supposedly affects only the person's social behaviour, with no trace on other traits: "most frequently, ideas about a struggle for truth and justice are formed by personalities with a paranoid structure," according to the Moscow Serbsky Institute professors".

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⁸⁸ http://forum.schizophrenia.com/t/psikhushka-soviet-psychiatric-hospitals/11081

If you think it cannot happen in the West, see how Marine Sgt Brandon Raub was arrested (2014) and detained for expressing his opinions of 911 on Facebook⁸⁹. John W. Whitehead, president of The Rutherford Institute (for Civil Liberties), said the following: "For government officials to not only arrest Brandon Raub for doing nothing more than exercising his First Amendment rights but to actually force him to undergo psychological evaluations and detain him against his will goes against every constitutional principle this country was founded upon. This should be a wake-up call to Americans that the police state is here."

We can see the roots of social control in the development of Darwin's ideas, especially by his second cousin Francis Galton, "the father of eugenics". Eugenics was a nineteenth-century theory that sought to improve the racial stock of human beings through scientifically controlled, selective breeding. It was partly inspired by Darwin's theory of evolution and its Social Darwinist offshoot. Galton believed that Britain's upper class were in their social positions because of a superior 'makeup'.

Eugenic ideas gained ground at the time of the Boer War (1899-1903), when it was found that many young men from slum backgrounds were unfit for military service. It was also noticed that healthy men from richer backgrounds also came from smaller families. The same fact was also observed in 1939 when it was discovered that the cause had nothing to do with hereditary factors but was simply the result of poor diet leading to the bone-deforming disease, rickets. In 1904, the Conservative government of Arthur Balfour established a Royal Commission "On the Care and Control of the Feebleminded," which reported in 1908 to the new Liberal government. It recommended compulsory detention of the mentally inadequate, as well as sterilisation of the unfit. Up to this point mental asylums were used only for the criminally insane, judged to be a danger to themselves and others.

Many prominent figures were influenced by Galton⁹⁰: Marie Stopes argued forcefully for the compulsory "sterilisation of those unfit for parenthood". Both Theodore Roosevelt and Churchill desired the neutering of the "feeble-minded", as was the parlance in Edwardian days. At University College London, Galton founded the Eugenics Records Office, which became the Galton Laboratory for National Eugenics. In the 1990s, it had long since dropped that toxic word to become the Galton Laboratory of the Department of Human Genetics.

Eugenics main aim was "to check the birth rate of the Unfit and improve the race by furthering the productivity of the fit by early marriage of the best stock" ⁹¹.

"Instead of natural selection producing the evolution of human populations through trial and error over many generations, eugenicists wanted to speed up the process by conscious human selection, confining breeding to the 'fittest' members of the race and by preventing inferior beings from having offspring. It is now commonly identified with the policies of 'racial hygiene' introduced by Nazi Germany in the 1930s. These involved the sterilization and euthanasia of people deemed mentally and physically inferior and, through the Nuremburg laws of 1935, the prevention of sexual intercourse between 'Aryans' and Jews.

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⁸⁹ http://yournewswire.com/marine-arrested-for-spreading-911-truth-on-facebook/

⁹⁰ https://www.theguardian.com/science/2015/mar/01/racism-science-human-genomes-darwin

⁹¹ http://www.stolengenerations.info/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=131&Itemid=116

Other countries in the 1920s and 1930s were also moti-vated by the theory. It became policy in both Sweden and the United States. Several American states passed eugenics-inspired laws permitting the sterilization of people with mental and physical disabilities and prohibiting marriage to anyone who was 'epileptic, imbecile or feeble-minded'. Eugenicists also influenced the US Immigration Act of 1924 to control the number of 'unfit' individuals entering the country. This act strengthened existing laws against miscegenation ⁹² and inter-racial marriage.

Today, academic commentators invariably fail to mention that the greatest enthusiasts for eugenics in the early twentieth century were active in socialist politics. Rather than accept the outcomes of laissez-faire population growth, socialists wanted the state to plan and control breeding. In England, the evolutionary biologist and socialist Karl Pearson advocated a national program to increase intelligence. He wanted to manage marriage in order to prevent those of low intelligence among the working classes from breeding."

America too was deeply involved in eugenics⁹³.

"As early as 1907, the United States had instituted public policy that gave the government the right "to sterilize unwilling and unwitting people." Laws, similar to Law 116, were passed in 30 states. These policies listed the insane, the "feeble-minded," the "dependent," and the "diseased" as incapable of regulating their own reproductive abilities, therefore justifying government-forced sterilizations. Legitimizing sterilization for certain groups led to further exploitation, as group divisions were made along race and class lines.

Some states, notably including North Carolina, set up Eugenics Boards in the early 20th century. These boards reviewed petitions from government and private agencies to impose sterilization on poor, unwed, and/or mentally disabled women, children and men. North Carolina alone sterilized over 7,600 individuals between the 1930 and 1970s.

Those⁹⁴ who began to study eugenics took it that the human population can be separated into two genetic classes:

".....the eugenic, or those who were deemed to have "fit" genes that should be perpetuated into the future, and the cacogenic, those who were condemned as having ill-fit genes that were believed to be toxic to the future health of our species. Given that rich, white, Anglo-Saxon males were the ones with wealth, power, and influence, it was predictable that, of course, they deemed themselves to be the ones who were "fittest," and anyone who threatened their power were conveniently situated on the cacogenic side of the eugenic divide. Those deemed cacogenic at this time included blacks, immigrants, criminals, the poor, the mad, the disabled, the mentally retarded, those with drug and alcohol addiction, and gays and lesbians, among others. The eugenic

⁹² The interbreeding of people considered to be of different racial types.

⁹³ http://www.ourbodiesourselves.org/health-info/forced-sterilization/

⁹⁴ http://www.saybrook.edu/newexistentialists/posts/09-12-12/

movement viewed individuals in these social classes as persons who were victimized by disease that must be cured by eliminating these people from the population, whether through segregation, sterilization, or extermination.

In America, the eugenics movement was funded by big money: Andrew Carnegie, John D. Rockefeller, and the widow of Edward Harriman (the railroad millionaire). "imbeciles, criminals, paupers, and the otherwise unfit...must not be bred." They supported the forced sterilization of American citizens. In 1913, twenty-nine states had laws preventing marriage between the races. It wasn't until 1967 that most of these laws were changed.

Connecticut has the dubious distinction of being the first state to ban marriage among those deemed "unfit." By 1914, more than 20 states had followed in the footsteps of Connecticut, and by 1933, every single state in the union had fallen into line. At this time, those deemed to be disabled or unfit were segregated into populations in order to prevent them from reproducing in the general population. These "asylums" were later rationalized to be "treatment" centres rather than the concentration camps they were originally intended to be. Between 1907 and 1927, the United States had victimized over 8,000 people with eugenic sterilization so that they could never again reproduce.

California took the evil of involuntarily sterilization to the level of an art form. Faced with the problem that involuntarily sterilization is a form of medical intervention that is intended to harm-that is, intended to destroy the ability to procreate-it was in violation of the Hippocratic Oath to "do no harm." To remedy this problem, California medical doctors quickly rationalized their behaviour by claiming their eugenics project was actually a form of treatment that would 'cure' the patient of his or her mental illness.

The American eugenics project, with the backing of the U.S. Supreme Court and supported by the huge pockets of the robber barons, inspired Europe nations to initiate their own eugenics programs. Soon, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Iceland were sterilizing citizens the elite deemed to be "unfit" according to their classist, xenophobic, sexist, and racist standards. It was only later that Hitler came to power and used these movements to initiate Germany's own eugenics program, which took the American eugenics project to its logical conclusion with the extermination of those deemed "unfit." No public outcry against the Nazi extermination of the disabled could be heard. In fact, American publications from the New England Journal of Medicine to The New York Times sang Hitler's praises as "progressive" for his "humane" extermination of "unfortunates."

Psychiatry is also still used to perpetuate racism. Today, we still see that black men are misdiagnosed with schizophrenia five times more often than white people. It is easier to label a person with madness and force his compliance with antipsychotic drugs than to endure the difficult job of listening to a man, who lived with the darkness of a lifetime of victimization by racism. Until we see such patterns disappear from psychiatry practice, I will remain unconvinced that psychiatry has fully escaped the weight of its shameful eugenic legacy."

You can see how racial theories were subtly translated into the control of humanity and how psychiatry aided and abetted that abuse. Colonialism used race theories to justify its expansion and treatment of indigenous peoples⁹⁵.

The first genocide of the twentieth century was the German annihilation of the Herero people in southwest Africa, now known as Namibia (1904 – 1907). The German geneticist, Eugene Fischer, did his first medical experiments on the 'science' of race mixing in concentration camps for the Herero. His subjects were both Herero and mulatto off-springs of Herero women and German men. Fischer argued that the Herero 'mulattos' were physically and mentally inferior to their German parents. Hitler read Fischer's book, The Principle of Human Heredity and Race Hygiene (1921), while in prison. Hitler later made Fischer rector of the University of Berlin, where he taught medicine. One of Fischer's prominent students was Joseph Mengele, who would select the victims for the gas chambers at Auschwitz. The Holocaust was the imperial chickens coming home to roost.

Under the Nazi regime, Fischer developed the physiological specifications used to determine racial origins and developed the Fischer–Saller scale (for hair colour). He and his team experimented on Gypsies and African-Germans, taking blood and measuring skulls to find scientific validation for his theories. Efforts to return the Namibian skulls taken by Fischer were started with an investigation by the University of Freiburg in 2011 and completed with the return of the skulls to Namibia in March 2014.

Humanity and normality became defined by experts, based on political idealism and pseudo-science. If your face and race did not fit, there was a special place and special treatment for you ⁹⁶.

"Hitler quoted the Eugenic Societies of the United States when he concluded that the creation of progeny should be based on what would be injurious to the racial stock. After 5000 sterilizations a month, the Nazis moved on to gas 80,000 schizophrenics, 20,000 manic-depressives, the deaf, the blind, the so-called feeble-minded, people with epilepsy, etc. American eugenic organizations were publicly jealous of their effectiveness. As is the norm, amnesia then set in and eugenics has disappeared from our consciousness.

The temperamental digestion of trauma into our personalities is the source of psychiatric conditions. Different temperaments experiencing similar traumas generate different psychiatric symptoms – you might have depression and I might have anxiety, or hyperactivity, phobias, or compulsions. There is no gene that determines psychiatric symptoms. We are not set up that way. Trauma is the source, while temperament determines the form.

How does this point toward the potential horrors of eugenics? It all follows from the delusional belief that psychiatry is about genetic brain diseases. At this stage, the PR battle has already been won and the false belief has taken root. The human race has

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⁹⁵ Reclaiming the Human Sciences and Humanities Through African Perspectives. 2003

⁹⁶ http://www.ma<u>dinamerica.com/2016/07/psychiatry-is-edging-dangerously-close-to-eugenics/</u>

been diluted by bad genes – this is not taken as a metaphor, but accepted as literally true. 13% of American adults take antidepressants, for 'biological' depression; five percent of children are diagnosed with ADHD; one in sixty-eight children have autism; 18% of Americans have anxiety disorder; 1% with schizophrenia; 2.6% with manic-depression; 2.3% with so-called OCD; 4-5% with phobias.

The second stage has been to put all these 'brain-damaged' people on drugs. But psychiatry and the pharmaceutical companies claim that not enough people are being 'treated' and that we need more drugs. Not only are almost 50% of adults on psychiatric drugs, we also have adolescents on drugs, children on drugs, even toddlers (see "Enough is Enough, Two Year Olds on Antipsychotics"). You may notice that we are working our way younger and younger, starting earlier and earlier, as we address our 'diseased brains'."

I come back to the point that I started with. The consequences of some of these ideas have been the destruction not the healing of mankind. If psychiatry cannot remake man in its own image, it will destroy him.

While humanity may be distributed across the globe and while they may have their national boundaries, they are in the eyes of their creator "one blood", Act 17:26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; Act 17:27 That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: The Creator does not discriminate between us on the basis of race but on the basis of sin.

I think that the Christian is in grave danger of accepting the psychiatric realm as valid science. He will do so because he will forget that there is a great gulf between him and the world of unbelievers. The unbelieving world is without hope and will stagger into the darkness, as lost souls, guided and drugged by its psychiatric mentors. Christians are not part of that world unless they deliberately give themselves over to it. If they think that they have the same mind, the same solutions, the same goals, satan will have won a victory. The Christian will have been deceived by his own ignorance and beguiled, 2Co 11:3 However, I'm afraid that as the snake deceived Eve by its tricks, so your minds may somehow be lured away from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. 2Co 11:4 When someone comes to you telling about another Jesus whom we didn't tell you about, you're willing to put up with it. When you receive a spirit that is different from the Spirit you received earlier, you're also willing to put up with that. When someone tells you good news that is different from the Good News you already accepted, you're willing to put up with that too. GW.

Now is Jesus capable of addressing the issues that psychiatrists call disorders? Can we expect Divine intervention for problems of the mind, because we have seen that the Creator does not always intervene in our physical disorders? We use doctors of medicine and accept that does not compromise our faith. Should we accept psychiatrists in the same way? Doctors do the body, psychiatrists do the mind?

We shall try to answer this in the next chapter.

35. Christians are different

I keep coming back to this point because it is so very important. I do not believe that we can lump together the people of God, those who are born again, with the children of this world, the unbelievers, when it comes to dealing with issues of the mind. We have seen that psychiatry has as its founders, men who are anti-Christian. The unbeliever will work against the believer because he is at enmity with his Creator. Rom 8:7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. The psychiatrists operate in a world of pseudoscience where people are seldom cured and treatments are heavily biased towards drugs for which there is a huge industry. Most of the so called mental diseases are invented by the psychiatrists and these are set out in the latest diagnostic manual DSM-5.

The Christian must ask why they would have anything whatsoever to do with this so called therapy? We are in a different kingdom. We are not of this world and the reality is that we are being prepared for the next world by the Creator of that world. The blind guides of this world will neither lead us there nor want us to get there and they will do all that they can to undermine the work of Christ.

I will preface this ministry with the reminder that we, as Christians, have a different world view to the unbeliever. We believe that sin has split the world into two communities, those dead in trespasses and sins and those forgiven by the blood of Christ. Those in sin are alienated from God. Eph 4:17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Eph 4:18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

You may think that because sin does not dramatically alter the external appearance of a person, that inside too, they are little different from you. They are not the same. They think differently, they are enemies of God and they are blind to the Word of God. In that state we will see different approaches between Christians and non-Christians when solving the problems of life. So I remind us that we should not be sucked into the world's approaches to solving problems, which are the consequence of sin. The Christian and the world will have different approaches because we think differently, because we believe differently and because we have the mind of Christ.

1Co 2:14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 1Co 2:15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. 1Co 2:16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ. If people profess to be Christians, born again, then they have a different resource to the unbeliever. The mind of the believer is and should be in a different place to that of the unbeliever.

I will also remind you that social interactions between us, the community of believers and the world, which is the community of unbelievers, has changed since Christ died. The OT nation Israel was both Church and State. In the NT, the Church is a body of believers whose Kingdom is not of this world. In the OT the state laws were God's laws and justice was dispensed within a believing framework. In the NT the state laws are not based upon God's laws (generally speaking) and 'justice' is dispensed within the framework of a humanist system. These will often be in conflict with the laws of Christ. As a result, what were once sins are now normalised and acceptable behaviour in society. Thus we will

find ourselves at odds with a system of godlessness that will work to conform the Christian to a godless world view and a godless way of thinking.

We must fight against this with all of the strength Christ can muster in us. Rom 12:2 And **be not** conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. We are by nature the product of a godless system and we must transition to a godly system.

Mental disorders are designated by so called experts to reflect social policy⁹⁷. The sinful world rewrites its mental disorders but the Creator never changes. Take this for example. 42 years ago homosexuality ceased to be a mental illness when most social sciences and the health and mental health professions globally agreed that homosexuality was a healthy variation of human sexual orientation. Amid growing opposition from gay activists, and dissent within its own ranks, the American Psychiatric Association was begrudgingly forced to expunge homosexuality from the DSM-2. Typical of the social nature of psychiatric diagnosis, the purging of homosexuality from the psychiatric nomenclature, highlights the instability of the psychiatric diagnosis: once signifying disease and perversion, homosexuality came to be recognized by the establishment as a normal variant of human sexuality. The 'coming out' of homosexuality from the DSM-2 allows us to reflect on the following:

- 1. Change in the concept of mental disorder is slow;
- 2. Diagnosis-making is a social act;
- 3. The construct of illness and disorder, 'mental' or otherwise is a social one;
- 4. The construct of illness has social consequences; and
- 5. Shifts in the concept and nature of disorder reflect wider social, political and economic forces more than scientific advancement.

It was not until 1987 that homosexuality completely disappeared from the DSM.

Man's world and man's kingdom is built on the shifting sands of sinful opinion. *Isa* 57:20 But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. *Isa* 57:21 There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. The Christian must realise that this is the way of the world and the only cure is to be found with its Creator. Diagnosis changes because man has failed to acknowledge what is really wrong with him, his deep seated animosity to his Creator and his sinful heart. There is Cain in everyman.

I mentioned in an earlier study that one person has created a list that contains 667⁹⁸ sins found in the Bible. Sins such as not abstaining from all appearance of evil, false accusing, failing to acknowledge sin, fear, unjustifiable anger, anxiety, arrogance, vain talking, backbiting, bitterness, divisiveness, violence, hatred, blasphemy, not blessing those that curse you, not bringing your children up in the Lord and so on. Problems such as fear, anxiety, sorrow, grief, loneliness, anger, resentment, hatred, unhealthy obsessions, lust can all reduce functionality. These not only affect the body, they are a product of the mind.

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⁹⁷ https://www.madinamerica.com/2014/12/homosexuality-came-dsm/

⁹⁸ http://www.amazingBible.org/Documents/Bible Studies/Sin list part 6.htm

Take the person who harbours resentment for example. Hatred, bitterness and anger to those around him. They will create their own stress, both physical and mental in his life. Some will even die of a stress related heart attack, so great is their anger⁹⁹. But as I have already said, if people profess to be Christians and are born again, then they have a different resource to the unbeliever. The mind of the believer is and should be in a different place to the unbeliever. If we do not have the mind of Christ, whose mind do we have?

How can a person who claims to be a Christian harbour resentment, hatred, bitterness and anger to those around them, especially to believers? Does not the Scripture make it quite plain that if we cannot deal with the source of those behaviours, when they are caused by an unforgiving spirit, that person cannot be forgiven themselves. *Mat 18:34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. Mat 18:35 So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.*

People do not need Christianity to be a nasty disturbed person, they have that by nature. Those who genuinely turn to Christ do so because they want change in their lives. They do not want to be that horrible person that sin made them, they want to become like Christ. We must ask ourselves why we came to Christ? Was it because we wanted salvation or a relationship with Christ that by definition means change?

It does not matter what religious experience you think that you have had, that makes a claim to forgiveness in Christ, it is a worthless cheque if it is not backed up by the forgiving attitude that Christ showed. You are simply unforgiven. *Luk 6:37 Forgive, and you will be forgiven*. If you can do that because you have the mind of Christ, you are immediately delivered of the anxieties attendant on resentment. I will suggest that if you love Christ, if you truly love Christ, you will find it impossible to have those bad attitudes. What I am suggesting is that the solution to most of our problems is our lack of focus towards Christ, our lack of love for Christ, our lack of communion with Christ. He is not central to our existence.

We Christians must not be defined by the world and the world's standards. In Christ we are not defined by our past, our past sins or our present faults. We are defined by our relationship with Christ. It is our relationship with Him that enables us to overcome the problems of this life.

What do we mean by love for Christ? I did not describe 'love' in the context of that study we did a few years ago ('Discipleship born out of hatred' in "The hard sayings of Jesus"). Love and hatred stand in antithesis to each other. Rom 9:13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. This was not vindictiveness, bitterness or angst towards Esau. We looked at 'hatred' as discarding or putting away, just as love is a gathering up and a show of compassion. Rom 9:14 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. Rom 9:15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

Love and hatred are like those two so called forces that are part of the laws of motion. Centrifugal and centripetal. You all know from your childhood, the feeling of being thrown off of a roundabout as it speeds up. That is centrifugal force, and it is how your spin drier works to remove the water

⁹⁹ Among people who were frequently angry, five episodes of anger a day could result in around 158 extra heart attacks per 10,000 people with a low cardiovascular risk per year and around 657 extra heart attacks per 10,000 annually among those with a high cardiovascular risk.

from a wash. Centripetal force attracts an object to its centre and stops it flying off, like a satellite orbiting the Earth. Eventually it will fall towards the centre.

Love is like that centripetal force that draws us in to the centre. *Jer 31:3 The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love:* **therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee**. Love is also a mutual attraction for the believer. It is like a marriage relationship, Christ and the Church.

My thesis is that the amount of mental suffering that we go through is inversely proportional to our closeness to Christ. I believe that the closer that we get to Christ, the less burden and anxiety we shall have in this world because Christ restores us to "our rightful minds". If we have fears, anxieties, worries, burdens, we must ask where Christ is in relation to these things? The chances are that we are carrying them alone. I want to address this issue of our mental state in Christ by firstly questioning our relationship with Him. Mat 11:28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Mat 11:29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. Mat 11:30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. Is that a promise? Yes. What are the conditions?

- 1. Take my yoke.
- 2. Learn of me.

There is a tradition that suggests that Jesus as a Carpenter made yokes in Joseph's workshop and no doubt made sure that they were a comfortable fit to the creature. The yoke shares a burden and we are certainly warned about the dangers of unequal yokes. It is not our yoke but one of Christ's making that we take up. Being yoked to Christ would mean being linked such that we walked together through life. I am reminded of the parent who was asked to use every opportunity to teach his children. Deu 6:7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. Deu 6:8 And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.

As we walk with Christ, so we learn from Him. A person who claims to walk with Christ but learns little of Him must ask what their relationship is all about. Do they want to walk with Christ? Are they yoked or are they not? Are they bothered? Do they just want 'the rest' offered but not the 'yoke' and the 'learning'? When we talk about 'the Christian walk' it is never a walk on our own. We are bound together.

Let us consider this further. How many Christians can tell you anything about Jesus? I suggest that most Christians are illiterate when it comes to knowing the Word of God and hence will know little about Jesus. Researchers George Gallup and Jim Castelli put the problem squarely¹⁰⁰:

"Americans revere the Bible but, by and large, they don't read it. And because they don't read it, they have become a nation of biblical illiterates." How bad is it? Researchers tell us that its worse than most could imagine.

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¹⁰⁰ http://www.christianity.com/1270946/

Fewer than half of all adults can name the four gospels. Many Christians cannot identify more than two or three of the disciples. According to data from the Barna Research Group, 60 percent of Americans can't name even five of the Ten Commandments. "No wonder people break the Ten Commandments all the time. They don't know what they are," said George Barna. The bottom line? "Increasingly, America is biblically illiterate."

Multiple surveys reveal the problem in stark terms. According to 82 percent of Americans, "God helps those who help themselves," is a Bible verse. Those identified as born-again Christians did better--by one percent. A majority of adults think the Bible teaches that the most important purpose in life is taking care of one's family.

I have no reason to believe that so called Christians in the UK can do any better. It does not surprise me that so many Christians appear to be having problems in their lives. I suggest that they do not have a proper relationship with Jesus. They will say that they made some commitment to Jesus, they believed in His death for sinners and that God loves them because of this but there is no change in the way that they live their lives. They just do not have 'the mind of Christ' because it is not important to them. Chances are that if you do not know where this verse is, it is hardly likely to be applied in your life. *Php 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus*: That is where we start to develop problems in our minds, the point where we discard the mind of Christ.

Christians are probably so ineffective at communicating Christ and the Gospel because there is a deep seated ignorance of these things. What most people want is a relationship with Christ that provides for their needs but not a relationship that changes their deeds. They want to live their own selfish lives but with the added benefit of an afterlife. I do not believe that people who cannot find time for Christ in this life will want to spend time with Him in the next life.

Christianity is like a supermarket or polyclinic to many. We become serious about Christianity when we have a personal need, a crisis in our lives. When we want something, when we have a problem, we go along to the catalogue, the Bible and see if we can find a remedy for our malady. We go to the religious supermarket and rake around the shelves for a cure, or a comforting word and when we have it we leave. We are not really interested in the Owner, we just want what He has on offer.

I have seen so many sad souls raking around for a text to give them hope in their desperate situation, taking the word out of context, expecting God to honour them in their hour of need, when they spend their days ignoring Him. Texts are just pieces of paper, sticking plasters, lucky charms, hopeful desires, all external to the real need. The real need is Christ in us. I call this attitude of seeking God in a crisis as 'breakdown maintenance'. It happens in Africa, that the only time you do something to your motor vehicle is when it breaks down. Like people who rush to Christ when their life breaks down.

The Gospels tell us a story about two people who built houses. It seems ridiculous that anyone would build on sand, surely every child knows the properties of sand. Yet many people who call themselves Christians do just that. It easier to put up a structure without the added cost of foundations. Mat 7:26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: Mat 7:27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

The point is that we suffer more if we are ill-prepared. If we are lazy in our Christian life, if we do not prepare for evil days, if we neglect our duty to Christ, then we suffer the more for it. We have no grounds for complaint. If we go against the Word of God in the way we live our lives, we suffer the consequences. We have no right to expect special treatment.

Biblical wisdom suggests that we are wise to develop our relationship with our Maker, sooner than later. Ecc 12:1 Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;

We have to learn that Jesus does not work for us but that we work for Him. Luk 17:7 But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? Luk 17:8 And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? Luk 17:9 Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. Luk 17:10 So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do. We are unprofitable servants and we must never forget that. We are not above the Master and we are there to do our duty.

The Lord does not like unprofitable servants. *Mat 25:26 His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:* Have you ever considered that unprofitable servant? He had a distorted view of his master, even knowing what he was required to do, he trembled in fear and did nothing. It was a test of faithfulness and the Lord knew that the man before him could not manage either five or two talents, so he gave him one. The servant was not singled out to do a task beyond his ability. He froze at the task and did nothing.

Well, you say, the passage is talking about Talents. Yet why would it not apply to anything that the Lord gave us to do? The Lord gave us His Word. It never ceases to amaze me how many Bibles you can find in second hand shops that were only opened once, when someone autographed the frontispiece, from "Aunty so-and-so, January 1st 1900). Bibles that are only opened on Sundays, Bibles that live their lives out in a bookcase are monuments to ignorance. We may well wonder how many of those owners now regret not iopening it.

I came across this translation the other day, talking about lazy people. *Pro 6:6 Consider the ant, you lazy bum. Watch its ways, and become wise. Pro 6:7 Although it has no overseer, officer, or ruler, Pro 6:8 in summertime it stores its food supply. At harvest time it gathers its food. Pro 6:9 How long will you lie there, you lazy bum? When will you get up from your sleep?* GW.

So how do we get the mind of Christ? How do we overcome the fear, anxiety, sorrow, grief, loneliness, anger, resentment, hatred, unhealthy obsessions, lust that we encounter in life?

36. Peace takers 1.

I remind us that our studies have as their subject "Jesus the Healer" because you may think that we have moved beyond the subject of healing. We have not. As citizens of another Kingdom, we Christians have need of healing and Jesus came to heal us, 1Pe 2:24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose

stripes ye were healed. What the verse says is that the work of Christ will totally restore us, physically and mentally. That does not mean that we will not die, we shall die. That body that goes in the ground is inextricably linked with the 'healed' body.

1Co 15:42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: 1Co 15:43 It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: 1Co 15:44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. Our minds too will be healed and that process is happening now.

I have suggested that the problems that Christians encounter in their lives, that make them ineffective and broken, are down to their relationship with the Saviour. Lack of commitment will lead to a lukewarm relationship where Christ is outside of the door and where He will spew them out for lack of devotion, Rev 3:15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. Rev 3:16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. They would have Jesus the Saviour inside the church and Jesus the Lord outside the church.

The most important issue that separates us from Jesus is our personal sin. It comes about in part by our failure to understand the nature of sin in the life of a believer. There are those who think that because they have 'accepted' Christ, sin is forever banished from their lives. I hate that term 'accepted' because what is important is that we know that Christ has accepted us, *Eph 1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved*.

If we look at sin objectively and collectively, it has been dealt with, it has been vicariously born by the Son of God, dying for His people, taking away their sin and remembering it no more. The punishment for our transgressions has been taken by another such that, *Rom 8:1 There is then no dampnation to them which are in Christe Iesu, which walke not after the fleshe, but after the spirite.* Bishops Bible. As Wesley so poetically put it,

No condemnation now I dread; Jesus, and all in Him, is mine; alive in Him, my living Head, and clothed in righteousness divine, bold I approach th' eternal throne, and claim the crown, through Christ my own.

Sin is a different matter subjectively. We are in a race and sin hinders us in that race. Heb 12:1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. It is quite clear that sin is an obstruction in our race. It is something that has not been removed entirely from our being. Our sinful nature requires mortifying.

It is my opinion that the OT Christians knew the nature of sin far better than we do in the NT. The Church in the OT, Israel, was brought to see the reality of sin every day of their lives. They were reminded of it in the minutiae of the laws of cleanliness. They were reminded of it in the stench and smoke of the sacrifices. They were reminded of their own sin in the emblems of substitutionary atonement on the Day of Atonement and every time their soul sinned and offered a sin offering to our God. Their lives were lived in the consciousness of personal sin. It should not therefore surprise us to see their joy at putting away all of the sacrifices through the one offering of Christ.

My contention is that we gentile Christians have not been brought up with the OT Christian's knowledge of sin. It barely gets a mention in the so called gospel evangelism that concentrates on 'giving your heart to Jesus' (another thing we are not asked to do). We are as a result people with no depth of knowledge of our personal sins. We are not told of the impact of this sin on our fellowship with the Creator and if anything we are directed to a place where we can forget sin altogether. It just becomes something in the new believers past that has no importance in the present.

Sin is not something that we focus on in our lives. It is not something that we examine ourselves for, as we might the first signs of cancer or some other disease. We become blissfully unaware that sin impacts our relationship with our Creator because although it has been dealt with by Christ, the benefits of Christ must be applied in our lives. Rom 6:17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Rom 6:18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. Being made 'free from sin' is not the same as 'being free of sin'. We are freed from the principal of sin as it works in our life, as it makes us a slave and we use that freedom to fight sin in our lives. The Salvation of Christ must become the Lordship of Christ. If He is not Lord now, He will be your Lord in Hell.

I do not see 'sin' as a frequent subject of ministries unless it is aimed at the unbeliever. It is somehow assumed that all believers are in a right and sinless relationship with their Maker. This minister puts it well¹⁰¹:

"I am convinced that the average churchgoer does not know what sin really is. The major reason for this is that modern-day preachers do not preach against sin. The Bible tells us that "sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4). This is where the problem is. Preachers today do not preach the Ten Commandments. Brain-washed by Scofieldism and antinomianism, they spend most of their time telling the people Christ freed us from the law. It is little wonder that a church member sees nothing wrong with lying, adultery, stealing, and even murder in some cases. From the sermons he has heard in his pulpit he thinks that Christ came to free man from the law, so he could do as he pleases. Many church members believe and practice this."

Is holiness no longer required? Of course not, 1Th 4:7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. Has the nature and form of sin changed since the OT? Of course not. What has changed is the sacrifice. It has been fulfilled in Christ but sin is still the same old sin. The sins committed by the OT saints are the same sins that we sin today. The consequences of those sins that they committed then are the same consequences for us unless we repent. It is business as usual as regards sin.

We still sin and if we say that we do not, we are liars. 1Jn 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 1Jn 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 1Jn 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1Jn 1:10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not

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http://www.christiandoctrine.com/in-the-news/religions/998-the-importance-of-preaching-against-sin

in us. There you are. Our Christian walk will take us on the path of cleansing. If we claim to be sinless we are liars. If we confess our sins we may obtain forgiveness and cleansing.

If we go through life with sins that are unresolved with the Lord we shall suffer. Perhaps as a warning against developing a cycle of repeating a sin and repenting, we might consider, *Joh 5:14* Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. At this time I am aware of a number of cases where people who call themselves Christians are suffering because of unresolved sin in their lives. They are affected by broken relationships that are caused by sin and they suffer mental anguish because of it. Scriven suggested in his hymn,

O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear, All because we do not carry Everything to God in prayer!

Did Joseph Scriven really practice what he preached? To this day, no one knows for sure if Joseph Scriven's death was accident or suicide. He was in serious depression at the time. A friend reported, "We left him about midnight. I withdrew to an adjoining room, not to sleep, but to watch and wait. You may imagine my surprise and dismay when on visiting the room I found it empty. All search failed to find a trace of the missing man, until a little after noon the body was discovered in the water nearby, lifeless and cold in death."

It might better be said, "O what needless pain we bear, all because we do not confess our sin". I do not believe that it is our Lord's desire that we should be miserable, depressed, dysfunctional, souls. I do not believe that coming to Christ sends us into a spiral of depression. I believe that if we will follow His word, life will only get better. Neh 8:10 Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength. Perhaps the first thing to examine if things are not going well in our lives is, "have we any unresolved sin?" The unresolved sin of Joseph's brothers and the sin of Jacob against Esau lingered in their lives for years and it will come back to haunt us. Num 32:23 But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out. Sin has a homing device.

One of the things that struck me when reading Jay Adams "Casebook for Christian Counsellors" some thirty years ago, was how many of the people who were undergoing counselling behaved in such an unchristian manner. Marriage problems, bitterness, anger, jealousies and despair were common subjects for counselling. Having re-examined it again, my opinion has not changed. In fact, what I do find hard to understand is how these people behave as they do and call themselves "Christians"? Their behaviour is so far from that laid down in the NT, that it is hard to believe that a work of grace has taken place in their lives. Indeed, this may be so in many cases because the Bible teaches that few are saved in the narrow way to life, although many aspire to trek the broad way. What is present in all cases is that Christ is not their Lord and that is why they have problems.

I acknowledge that some 'Christians' may still be learning and growing into their faith. Yet I must question what sort of input they are getting into their lives when they fail to mature. Paul sees this immaturity in the Corinthian church. 1Co 3:1 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. 1Co 3:2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. 1Co 3:3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? 1Co 3:4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

Paul calls them 'carnal', 'fleshly' and babies. He does not call them 'carnal christians', just carnal. You cannot be a 'carnal Christian' any more than you can have a 'heavenly devil'. Christians are by definition disciples or followers (Acts 11:26). Lives that are marked by envying, strife and divisions, lives that go on like that, place a question mark over the individual's salvation. Why do I say that? Because the carnal mind is an enemy of God, it is lawless and those who are like that do not please God and it leads to death. Rom 8:6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Rom 8:7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. Rom 8:8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

The Corinthian church tolerated fornication (as churches do today) and we might add to that in our age, homosexualism and pornography (vicarious sex). Paul did not regard these as occasions for counselling or therapy but excommunication because these people had infected the church with their sin. They would like yeast, leaven the church with "malice and wickedness". It was not an occasion to cosy up with these people but to avoid them and not even eat with them. Paul further warns in the epistle, 1Co 6:9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 1Co 6:10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the Kingdom of God. 1Co 6:11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

Let us ask why the Apostle does not counsel people with these sinful behaviours? In my experience, it is very hard to get people to acknowledge that they are sinning. We have seen that in our church and many times over the years. People become stubborn and unyielding, they hate being confronted and generally they will shut off conversations where their sin is confronted. I cannot say that I have seen anyone that has immediately and readily acknowledged their sin, they fight against that. Therapy groups are a waste of time unless people wanted to change but then perhaps preaching to the church is a form of group therapy.

Of course there is a huge difference between someone who wants help and one who does not, *Gal 6:1 Brothers and sisters, if a person gets trapped by wrongdoing, those of you who are spiritual should help that person turn away from doing wrong. Do it in a gentle way. At the same time watch yourself so that you also are not tempted. GW. Someone who wants to change, finds it difficult but is responsive is a different matter. Paul does admonish Christians and encourages admonition, <i>Rom 15:14 And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish* (vouθετέω = noutheteō) *one another*. People who disobey are bad company for believers. *2Th 3:14 And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that*

man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. 2Th 3:15 Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish ($vou\theta\epsilon\tau\dot{\epsilon}\omega$ = nouthete \bar{o}) him as a brother. Paul is not asking us to be nasty to those who are in error. He does put them in mind of their duty but there is no protracted discussion on the behaviour, weekly therapy sessions to change the individual. Aversion therapy, cognitive behavioural therapy, acceptance and commitment therapy, non-directive therapy, nouthetic counselling, in fact no therapy at all.

God did not gift the church with counsellors, therapists, psychiatrists and drug dispensers. He gave Apostles, Prophets, Pastors, Teachers and Evangelists to prepare the Saints for the work of the ministry. What seems to have happened is that God's gifts have been supplanted by a new breed of mind changers.

Sin is not a subject for discussion but a subject for repentance. When Adam sinned, the Creator does not say, 'well you do not have much experience in life, we need to have a few sessions of counselling to sort your understanding out and things will be back to normal'. No. If Adam was forgiven, the consequence of his sin was certainly not removed from humanity. We bear the consequences today. It is a warning to us that while we can be forgiven sin, the consequences often remain. Above that it is not a matter for dialogue or arbitration with the Creator.

When King Saul sinned he thought that he knew better than God what God wanted, but he was wrong. 1Sa 15:23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king. 1Sa 15:24 And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice. It was not a matter for counselling or therapy to get a right mindset. To his credit, Saul acknowledged his sin straightway when it was pointed out but sadly he feared men more than God. Saul had mental issues right up to his death that were never fully dealt with and I think that comes down to his relationship with his God.

When sin is in the public domain, when it is widely known, Paul goes a step further with the Corinthians and tells them that they had a 'public' duty 1Co 5:5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. If there was a cure it was to let the flesh go to the full extent of its lust and let satan destroy it, so that at least the spirit would be saved. Now how many churches would do that? Hardly any, because they would sooner dialogue with the individual rather than put him on the path to a biblical cure. They would not want to be judgemental, they would not want to be directive, in short they just stand by and watch.

For matters of individual sin, there is a protocol in Matthew chapter 18. In private matters, you firstly and personally go to the individual concerned. If you do not do this but gossip to someone else and ask them to act for you, you compound your sin. If a person will not accept that they sinned against you (and perhaps they did not) then you must establish the matter with witnesses (and perhaps they will say it is not a sin). If they do establish the matter and it is not accepted by the sinner it must be taken before the church. If the person will not listen, then they are declared a

heathen and a publican, with the consequences that they are put out of fellowship. Counselling and therapy are not part of this process.

Is this lack of 'therapy' because sin is an individual responsibility? My responsibility before God is to change my life and it is not someone else's responsibility. I have the lists of do's and don'ts. I have the Word of God and if I cannot be bothered to obey it, find out about God's way for me, 'put off the old man', shed my old worldly life, 'put on the new man', then it is clear that I care little for it and will suffer as a result. If we are not prepared to obey the teaching of Christ, listen to Him, then it is likely that we are not His sheep, Joh 10:26 But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. Joh 10:27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

I think that the reason that churches have become liberal is because they have not applied the Word of God in their own individual lives and they tolerate those who will not, as if they are fellow believers, which of course they are not. They are leavened with sin, they look for ways of justifying and accepting sin and they compromise with people who do not obey Christ. Let me state it clearly. You have nothing to do with Jesus Christ if you do not heed what He says and follow Him in it.

Can you imagine what state the mind those people have, who reject the Word of God and think that they are saved? Jude warns the church of these people. Jud 1:12 These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; Jud 1:13 Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

There is a warning in this, namely that your 'church' could be doing your soul more harm than good and that it is important that you examine carefully who your worship with. Do not become inured, accustomed to sin around you or in your personal life. That will damage your relationship with God and it will affect your mind. It is your personal relationship with Christ that is at stake.

The theme of this ministry has been personal sin in the life of those who consider themselves Christians. Is it something that concerns us? Do we make a conscious effort to examine our lives? 2Co 13:5 examine your own selves if ye be in the faith; prove your own selves: do ye not recognise yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you, unless indeed ye be reprobates? Darby. Salvation is not something to be taken for granted. Faith is ever to be proved in our lives. This is not because we are uncertain of Christ's work in us. It is because we want it so much we will not let anything get in its way. We want fellowship with Christ, Php 3:10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

Sin that is not dealt with carries a health warning. Communication with the Divine is severed and peace is taken from us. Salvation without Lordship is doomed to failure.

37. Peace takers 2.

We have seen that our sin can cause problems of the mind and that if we have problems with our mind, it is likely that we do not have the mind of Christ or that we have a problem in our relationship with Christ. How do we strengthen our relationship with Christ?

You can tell a lot by a person's conversations just what their relationship is to the person that they are speaking to. The things that they speak about, what concerns them, the intimacy, the love, the emotions, the familiarity with which they appear to know each other display the relationship. We would expect a more formal conversation with someone that we do not know well, than with someone whom we know well. It does not take much to tell whether two people are friends or just vague acquaintances.

I have observed many professions of faith, especially from younger people that show little or no gratitude to the person they claim has just saved them. They walk away from a 3 minute acceptance speech into a lifetime of pretence and ignorance. People are so quick to take from Christ and so slow to give thanks. Of the ten lepers healed, only one wanted a conversation with God, the other nine went back to their ritual religion healed but not saved. The one who returned could not go to earthly priests because he was not a Jew but a stranger. He came to Christ. Luk 17:17 And Jesus answering said, 'Were not the ten cleansed, and the nine--where? Luk 17:18 There were not found who did turn back to give glory to God, except this alien;' Luk 17:19 and he said to him, 'Having risen, be going on, thy faith hath saved thee.' YLT. Are we enthusiastic? People used to complain about the Cornish evangelist Bill Bray because of his enthusiastic singing and shouting. His response was, "If they were to put me in a barrel, I would shout glory out through the bunghole! Praise the Lord!"

I cannot imagine a marriage where two people do not speak to each other frequently, every day. Did you just sit there looking at each other when you first met your spouse, lost for words or did you have endless conversations? When those conversations dry up, when you stop talking, when you avoid conversations, when you avoid talking about problems, your marriage is in trouble. It is one of the signs that the marriage is foundering. Where communication is at a minimum the relationship hardly exists and may have ceased altogether. How does our relationship with Christ score on a conversation scale, 1 (low) to 10 (high)? What needs working on to improve your score?

Marriage is a covenant and a companionship, Mal 2:14 Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. Do we have that sort of relationship with Christ, because that is what I am suggesting that we need. We need to develop our friendship with Christ, our own personal relationship. Last time we saw that unresolved sin is a destroyer of that relationship. So is silence.

Jesus says that He is our friend if we obey Him, Joh 15:14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Have you ever considered yourself a friend to Jesus? It was said of Abraham that he was God's friend. 2Ch 20:7 Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever? Jas 2:23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for

righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. That is a close relationship. Why should not we be a friend of God? Do we want it?

It was said of Moses, Exo 33:11 And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. A true friend is a brother for all seasons and circumstances, Pro 17:17 A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. Friendship is a relationship born out of love. I want that relationship with my God.

Talking to God. I believe that many Christians worship at a distance and have not developed that intimacy and friendship that is shown us in the Gospels. If we spent more time working on it than on our temporal relationships we would have peaceful lives but I do not think that this comes naturally to us. Talking with the Creator of the Universe is a big concept to grasp. When we make our first steps as believers we begin a relationship with our former enemy, our Creator. Communicating with God was not something that we had done before, so it is not normal. We should not be put off by this as it does not come easily to most people, yet it is a wonderful thing to behold, a remarkable thing as Christ told Ananias. Act 9:11 The Lord said to him, "Get up and go to the street named Straight, and ask in the house of Judah for someone from Tarsus named Saul. For look, he is praying; TLV.

Has it ever passed across your mind to ask why services of worship concentrate on singing rather than individual prayer? Why we have a song leader and we chime along with them rather than having an opportunity of expressing our personal praise and worship to our Saviour? Could it just be that we find it difficult to speak with the Lord as individuals? It is not something that comes naturally.

The disciples heard Jesus talking to His Father and realised that they needed coaching in prayer. Having listened to Jesus they may have realised that what they had passed off as prayer was nothing like the prayer of Jesus. Luk 11:1 And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. Luk 11:2 And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. It seems that prayer is something that we need teaching, just as we teach our children language by talking to them. In the prayer Jesus teaches, sometimes called the Model prayer or the Lord's prayer, He sets out structured prayer. Unfortunately it has for some become an empty prayer, a mantra, a minor creed spoken at funerals or religious occasions. I do not think that Jesus had this use in mind when He taught His disciples.

I think that this model prayer is a 'vade mecum', a 'go with me', a guide to prayer, things to remember.

Our Father which art in heaven,

Hallowed be thy name.

• Thy kingdom come.

• Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

• Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts,

as we forgive our debtors.

Our relationship The person of God

The consummation of the ages

Our duty to the Creator

Providence

Personal forgiveness

Forgiveness of others

and lead us not into temptation,

• but deliver us from evil:

• For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

Divine protection
Divine deliverance
Omnipotence of God

We are encouraged to pray even when we have difficulty praying, because we are not sure how to pray in a particular situation, is no excuse not to pray. We have a promise that the Holy Spirit will intercede for us. Rom 8:26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. This suggests that the Spirit will add body, substance to our prayers, that He will form and formulate them, guide and deliver them. It is also a good idea to spend time preparing to pray.

I would think that it is always best to be yourself when you talk to your Father. Some people have the habit of changing the way that they speak, they adopt a different voice, a pious voice. They may even lapse into 16th century English, with 'thees' and 'thous' abundantly peppering their petitions. Now what would you think of someone who you had been listening to, turned to you and started a conversation in a completely unnatural voice, asking, "How art thou this day?" You would probably and rightly think that there was something wrong with them (or perhaps you) that required a complete change in the way you communicate.

Our Creator is the Creator of Language and He understands and speaks every dialect in the Universe. He even speaks the language of the wind and the sea, *Mat 8:27 But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him*! I do not think that we need to make pretence when we pray because the Lord already sees deep into our hearts. If we wish to show piety, it should be in our whole demeanour, the way we live our lives. I do not think for one minute that the disciples changed the way that they spoke when Jesus walked in the room.

I wonder if those disciples realised that their conversations with Jesus as they walked along the pathways and tracks of Judea, were not dissimilar to prayer. They were having conversations with God, they were baring their hearts, expressing their doubts, showing their fears, asking for blessings. They were in a manner of speaking, 'praying'. It was just that God was there in the flesh rather than Spirit. God was talking to them and they were talking to God and that is how it should be with us.

I do not read that the disciples had trivial conversations with Jesus. Nothing about the latest gladiatorial combats in the Coliseum, the price of olive oil on the global market, the latest fashions from Italy and local gossip. The disciple's lives since their calling revolved around the good news that Jesus brought and the changes in their lives that was expected as a result of accepting that news. Every conversation was a prayer and perhaps we can learn something about talking to Jesus from their conversations. They were friends but they were not over familiar and if it did get that way, Jesus told them. Joh 21:21 Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Joh 21:22 Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me. Prayer starts off by reminding ourselves who we are speaking to, our relationship with Him and where we are having our conversation. "Our Father who art in Heaven".

Further advice on talking to God sets the scene for prayer. Don't be ostentatious like the hypocrites but have a personal conversation in private, one on one as we say. Avoid repeating yourself. *Mat 6:5*

And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. Mat 6:6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. Mat 6:7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

Be aware that here is a difference between repetition and persistence. Jesus told us to keep at it, to persist in prayer, Luk 18:1 And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; The example given is of a widow who importunes a judge until she gets her petition granted. Luk 18:5 Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. Luk 18:6 And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. Luk 18:7 And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? That is persistence, prayer with purpose, prayer from the heart. Repetition is a form of words said for effect but without any substance or purpose. A bit like the catholic priest giving so many 'our Father's' as an act of penitence after confession.

In his autobiography, Wilfred Grenfell, missionary to Labrador, said that he had been converted through D L Moody's common sense. After a young minister turned the opening prayer into an oratorical effort, young Grenfell grew bored and restless and decided to sneak out. Moody spotted him and interrupted the prayer with, "Let us sing a hymn while our brother finishes his prayer." Delighted at the remark, Grenfell dashed back to his seat and was soundly converted at the sermon's close.

There are many things to pray for, Mat 5:44 pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; Mat 9:38 Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest. Php 1:9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; Col 1:9 For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; 1Th 5:25 Brethren, pray for us. 2Th 1:11 Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power: 2Th 3:1 Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you: Jas 5:13 Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Jas 5:14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: Jas 5:16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

There is so much to talk about that we should be able to 1Th 5:17 Pray without ceasing.

Listening to God. Talking with the Lord is one thing, getting answers is another. I have heard lots of people say that "The Lord told me this" or "The Lord told me to do that" and so on and I used to wonder why I did not get this regular definitive response to my prayers. I also looked at some of their lives and their walk and that made it harder to understand because many of them were disobedient to Christ. How did they have such familiarity? Maybe they did but we must have something more authoritative than someone's personal experience to guide us to the voice of God.

The Lord may speak to us in different ways, for example, after Jesus leaves His disciples, He still speaks with them openly on occasion, such as when Peter is praying on the roof of a house in Joppa and has a vision in his sleep. Act 10:13 A voice said to him, "Peter, get up! Kill these and eat them." Act 10:14 But Peter said, "Lord, I can't do that! I've never eaten anything that is unclean and not fit to eat." Act 10:15 The voice spoke to him again, "When God says that something can be used for food, don't say it isn't fit to eat." Act 10:16 This happened three times before the sheet was suddenly taken back to heaven. CEV. It is not a trivial conversation and comes at very important time in the spread of the Gospel, the time when the Gospel is going out to the gentiles. I do not say that this is something that will happen every day but there are times when the message from God is delivered with more force. This, it can be seen, is not frequent in the history of the churches.

Perhaps neo-pentecostalism has led to the rise of "The Lord told me" brigade, who have many personal revelations of the voice of God. Christians get answers to prayer but not continually with 'voices' from God and indeed, how would you discriminate the voice of God from the angel of light? If I may suggest a reason for this lack of 'voices' in the NT, it is that it would be divisive. Human nature, being what it is would set up factions, all going off and doing their own thing because it would all be about 'ME' and what God told me and that would be open to pride and class divisions among believers. 1Co 1:12 Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. 1Co 1:13 Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

I can remember back in the 1970's that baptism in the spirit, which meant speaking in tongues then, was being pushed around the churches. There was a definite feeling of inferiority among those who had not experienced this 'phenomenon'. It did not unite as on the day of Pentecost, it divided people. I believe that God will give us a consistent response such that we are united in what we are told. It will be a consistent message and it will be through the word. I think that the Lord does speak back to us but He speaks "Biblish". He answers us mostly through the Word of God. The Word of comfort and assurance *Rom 15:4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.*

There are many **conversation blockers**. This is an excellent translation. *Jas 4:3 You ask, and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, in order that you may spend on your lusts.* LITV. The AV has the word 'consume' but it is perhaps better rendered 'spend' as with the woman who 'spent' all that she had on physicians. We must not pray for things to 'spend' on our own desires, to feed our lusts. The Lord says that you will not have it, because you ask 'evilly' ($\kappa \alpha \kappa \tilde{\omega} \varsigma = kak\bar{o}s = evil$). The word is also rendered 'sick' in the NT. We might say that 'your requests are sick' because there is something wrong with you to make you ask like that. You will get no answers.

When we talk to our Lord, it makes sense to question our motives, especially if we are making personal requests. The heart can be very deceitful. You may pray for a Divine windfall so that you can bless others with it (and probably use a fair bit on yourself). Is that right? If we are not prepared to give of our substance, why would God support our deceitful efforts. We must bring the Truth into the inward dark recesses of our hearts to expose our wickedness. We cannot talk with a Holy God speaking through a curtain of sin. Confession should precede prayer.

If selfish lust inhibits our conversation with God, so does an unforgiving attitude. *Mar 11:25 And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven*

may forgive you your trespasses. Attitude counts, 1Ti 2:8 I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. If you have anger in your heart, doubt, then you cannot pray aright. If you have a problem in your marriage, your prayers are hindered, 1Pe 3:7 Husbands, in a similar way, live with your wives with understanding since they are weaker than you are. Honour your wives as those who share God's life-giving kindness so that nothing will interfere with your prayers. GW.

Sin as we have already seen is a prayer blocker, *Psa* 66:18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me: If we think that we can pray when we are in open disobedience to the Word of God the prayer becomes an abomination. *Pro* 28:9 He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination. Enough said. There are good reasons why the Lord does not communicate with us and it is down to us. The sin that blocks our conversations will also bring the anxieties of a soul at odds with his Maker.

Lack of compassion is another blocker. *Pro 21:13 Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard*. Doubt is little different from lust. *Jas 1:6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. Jas 1:7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.*

The Lord expects us to be in a right frame of mind to talk effectively with Him. There are things that we must have in place before we pray, not expecting Him to sort out things that we can do. Some people creep into God's presence like Uriah Heep, full of self-humility, so 'umble, vainly hoping that God will be fooled by the act and fail to see what is on the inside. *Mat 23:25 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Mat 23:26 Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.*

I close by reminding you of that selfless brother George Muller. We noted this in the second chapter of this series, said in his own words:

"November 25 1835. I have been again much in prayer yesterday and today about the Orphan-House, and am more and more convinced that it is of God. May He in mercy guide me! The three chief reasons for establishing an Orphan-House are:

- 1. That God may be glorified, should He be pleased to furnish me with the means, in its being seen that it is not a vain thing to trust in Him; and that thus the faith of His children may be strengthened.
- 2. The spiritual welfare of fatherless and motherless children.
- 3. Their temporal welfare."

At the age of ninety one years, 2 years before his death, he reflected, "He has never failed me! For nearly seventy years every need in connection with this work has been supplied. The orphans, from the first until now, have numbered nine thousand five hundred; but they have never wanted a meal. Hundreds of times we have commenced the day without a penny; but our Heavenly Father has sent supplies the moment they were actually required. There never was a time when we had no wholesome meal. During all these years I have been enabled to trust in the living God alone. Seven million

five hundred thousand dollars have been sent to me in answer to prayer. We have needed as much as two hundred thousand dollars in one year, and it has all come when needed. No man can ever say I asked him for a penny. We have no committees, no collectors, no voting, and no endowments. All has come in answer to believing prayer."

Mar 11:24 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

38. Peace takers 3.

We could keep going on this subject of 'Peace takers' but we conclude it by looking at the subject of worship and how our worship can affect our mind. As we look at the issues that can bring problems into our lives, we might ask, "Why, if the way that we worship is wrong, does not God make it clear to us?" Why do we just get problems rather than a clear statement that we are doing wrong? Is it not obvious? We have been warned already in Scripture, so how many warnings do we need?

Let me give a simple example to explain my point. When Israel lost the Ark of the Covenant to the Philistines, God smote the Philistines and the Ark was returned. David wanted to bring the Ark back to Jerusalem and so the put it on an ox cart but something terrible happened. 2Sa 6:6 And when they came to Nachon's threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it. 2Sa 6:7 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God. Why?

The Ark was to be carried by priests, on their shoulders, *Exo 37:5* And he put the staves into the rings by the sides of the ark, to bear the ark. They did not stick a label on the side of the Ark saying "do not carry on a cart", they were supposed to know what to do, just as we have the Word of God to tell us what to do. If we are struck without warning, as Uzzah was, we are without excuse, because we should have educated ourselves to know what the Lord wanted. *2Sa 6:9* And David was afraid of the LORD that day, and said, How shall the ark of the LORD come to me? David did not make the same mistake three months later when He brought the Ark into Jerusalem, on the shoulders of the priests.

So when people in the Corinthian church started to fall sick and die, do you think that they realised why? Probably not as young believers, without a deep understanding of God's working in the OT. Paul tells them why. Paul tells them the cause that they are weak, sick and dying. We should note that God did not explain Himself before the event and we should be very careful to dismiss our problems as having natural causes rather than spiritual. It was a warning to that church, yet it was a silent killer.

From what we have considered, it should not surprise us that there will be times when we will be under spiritual attack and that there will be mental pressures associated with that. It is part of the battle against principalities and powers. The way we act is itself a lesson to them, *Eph 3:10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God*. Can we expect to show that wisdom when we are showing our life of sin to them? Can we show God's wisdom when we do not talk to God? Can we show that wisdom when we go about in ignorance of God's word? Do we think that our Creator will be pleased with us because we are unconcerned about the way that we pretend to represent Him?

What lessons does a so called 'christian marriage', that is a battlefield and heading to the divorce court, teach principalities and powers about God's wisdom? What does a Christian family show of God's wisdom when they never hold private times of worship and the Word of God is never on their lips? What lessons do the adulterers, fornicators, paedophiles and homosexualists teach principalities and powers about God's wisdom when they say 'God loves them'? The 'christians' hunched over their screens watching pornography, what do they teach of God's wisdom? Those hate filled unforgiving souls that claim to be saved, what do they teach principalities and powers of God's wisdom? Those 'christians' who are held down by an unequal yoke of their own making, what does that teach principalities and powers? Those people who visit God only on Sunday, what do they teach principalities and powers?

Yet more than all of that, what does that behaviour speak of us, to our Creator? I know that if people like that, people whose lives were a mess, tried to sell me that Gospel, I would have turned away in an instant. If we see through the hypocrisy of others, I am quite sure our Lord does. Further than that, He sees straight through us. Do we for a moment deceive ourselves that those deliberately wicked deeds give us peace with God? *Isa 48:22 There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked.* Do we also deceive ourselves that there are no consequences? Do we think that Christ has amnesia, is somehow neglectful, indifferent or accepting of conduct that it totally at odds with the life that He ordains for us? Do we really think that He is indifferent to sin?

Christ does not like 'warm' churches. Most churches give a warm welcome like this one I found, 'for those who do not often attend', saying, "Coming to church can often mean overcoming a fear of walking through the door, but on Sunday morning we will celebrate a Family Holy Communion with particular joy and we are confident that new people joining us will receive a very warm welcome." That makes it alright then? No. Jesus prefers a church that is cold, to a warm church. Rev 3:15 I know everything you have done, and you are not cold or hot. I wish you were either one or the other. CEV.

Once the devil has locked up everyone in their warm little 'church', shut the door, with Jesus on the outside knocking to get in, satan has nothing to fear of that church. What message does that send to principalities and powers? The devil can set to work making his antichrist, because as we know, they are not made outside the church, they are manufactured in the church. 1Jn 2:18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. 1Jn 2:19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. Some churches are like the Alamo. The main task is to stop anyone entering, to put people off, to dissuade them and many succeed admirably. If Jesus is outside of the church. Who locked Him out and why? Or could it be that Jesus works more among the spiritually destitute of the world than in the churches?

The book of Revelation does not say that Christ was in any of the seven Churches. At risk of sounding pedantic, let me explain what I mean. Rev 1:20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches. Christ is in the middle of the churches collectively, Rev 1:13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. The question is, how does Jesus get into the churches?

The Lord Jesus sent a message to the churches through His 'angel' or messenger, which we see is spoken by the Spirit, *Rev 2:7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith* unto the churches; The message to each individual church is to be heard in all churches. Churches, churches collectively and we must listen to the Spirit who brings the message of Christ. These messages are 'nouthetic', admonishing the churches. *1Co 10:11 Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition* (vou θ εσία=nouthesia), upon whom the ends of the world are come.

I think that we have a view that Christ is somehow external to us in worship, Christ in the midst of the candlesticks. This idea is held by those who call the meeting places, 'the House of God'. Who gave them the right to say that? Only David's son was given leave to build a house to God, 2Sa 7:13 He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. No one built 'houses of worship' in the NT. One reason is that Christ lives in his people not in houses made of stone. Act 17:24 God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Act 17:25 Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

The reality is that Christ is in the church because He is in the individual believers. Jesus has no fellowship with those unsaved, unbelieving, religious pretenders, though they turn up for a thousand years. 2Co 6:14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? 2Co 6:15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

Members of the Body of Christ are the physical representation of Christ in this world. The believer is the conduit through which Christ manifests His life to the world today. The world sees Jesus through our lives and what does that say of Him? When we get a mixed multitude together in a pretence of worship, some 'messy church', we commit a sin. The so called 'Reformation', the schism with the Catholic church did nothing to properly redefine the relationship of the believer with God. It was still perpetuating an institutional church, the church of England (Article 27), which sprinkled its infants with 'magic water' into believing that they were regenerate

Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened, but it is also a sign of Regeneration or New-Birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive Baptism rightly are grafted into the Church; the promises of the forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed; Faith is confirmed, and Grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God. The Baptism of young Children is in any wise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ.

Did that act of sprinkling put Christ in the heart? How many have gone to hell thinking they were saved because they were told lies and the churches did not tell the truth or make a stand for holiness but let them dream from week to week, that their idle attendance was acceptable to God? Is the Lord honoured by a mixed multitude? Is it not a sin to encourage unbelievers to think that they can be part of Christ's body? If Nehemiah saw the truth in his day, why cannot we? Neh 13:1 On that day they read in the book of Moses in the audience of the people; and therein was found written, that the Ammonite and the Moabite should not come into the congregation of God for ever; Neh 13:2 Because they met not the children of Israel with bread and with water, but hired

Balaam against them, that he should curse them: howbeit our God turned the curse into a blessing. Neh 13:3 Now it came to pass, when they had heard the law, that they separated from Israel all **the mixed multitude**.

We must further reflect that if a believer does not worship in truth, he suffers for it, 1Co 11:29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 1Co 11:30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. This is a salutary lesson to us that God does not suffer believers to worship irreverently, why should He make an exception for the unbelievers?

I do not see that the NT encourages Gospel Services in churches, inviting unbelievers to participate in their worship. Jesus Himself makes this clear, Joh 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. You cannot worship in the flesh and the fleshly man, the unbeliever, cannot worship in truth. The unbeliever cannot worship like you and I do not believe that it is regarded as normal in the NT. 1Co 14:24 But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: 1Co 14:25 And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth. The outcome of spiritual worship among believers is that it is convicting. If we go after the souls of men it is outside of our fellowship meetings and let us never ever forget that we are in a different kingdom to them. We are not the same as unbelievers.

The point that I am making is that Christ is present in the assembly, <u>IN the believers</u>. If there are no believers, Christ is not there. Do I make my point? *Col 1:27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:* We do not go to 'church' to meet Christ, we meet together bringing Christ IN us and WITH us. Vance Havner rightly said, "The primary qualification for a missionary is not the love of souls, as we so often hear but love for Christ". It is Christ IN us that should drive everything that we do. If Christ is outside of the 'church' it is because He is not in anyone in the 'church'.

Jesus is outside of the Laodicean church because He is not in the people inside of the church. If He was in the people in the church, how could He be outside of the door? Its not about Jesus coming in to hear preachers preach, coming in to share songs, there are no shortage of singers and preachers in churches. He comes to dine with us but dine on what? Rom 14:17 For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but **righteousness**, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Rom 14:18 For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.

If Christ will vomit the 'warm' church attendees out of His mouth, what does that say about the 'once saved always saved' brigade or the idea that God will not bring evil on people who disobey His word in the church because 'He loves them in spite of their sin'? There is a false idea that God's love overrides judgement. I remind us that in the OT, Deuteronomy Chapter 28, it lists a host of ills that will befall people who do not obey God's Word. Deu 28:15 But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee: You will see that fear, anxiety and madness are among these evils. These things will run faster than you and take you down. They will strike suddenly.

You may say, well, that is OT but now, Christ has taken all the penalties of the law away. You may say that we are free because our relationship with God has changed. Has it? Has God changed His attitude to His Word that it means less now than it did then? That the penalties for neglect and disobedience are mitigated, so that we can 'sin that grace may abound'? Rom 6:2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? If we do not live in the Power and Lordship of Christ we shall suffer, Heb 2:1 Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. Heb 2:2 For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; Heb 2:3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; Indeed, how shall we escape?

When the NT gives you and I examples of Christian living, it uses the OT. Jas 5:10 Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience...... Heb 4:1 Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. Heb 4:2 For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. They too had the gospel.

The examples of a faithful relationship with Jehovah are taken from the OT and a whole chapter is devoted to them by way of encouraging us, Heb 11:4 By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh. The passage concludes that this great cloud of encouragement should remind us to put our backs into the race. Heb 12:1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Heb 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Why would Paul use this example from the OT, if it were irrelevant to our case today? 1Co 10:1 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; 1Co 10:2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 1Co 10:3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat; Co 10:4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. 1Co 10:5 But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. 1Co 10:6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. 1Co 10:7 Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. 1Co 10:8 Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. 1Co 10:9 Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. 1Co 10:10 Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. 1Co 10:11 Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. 1Co 10:12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

Christ it said, was with the people of Israel, the church in the wilderness, and they ALL drank of Christ and yet in one day 23,000 died. Is that not a warning? I believe that the elect of God will be

saved but I do not believe the neglect of God will save. If a man claims to be elect, he will not neglect his salvation. Php 2:12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. Php 2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. If you are not reverentially working out your salvation, then you may rightly consider that God is not working in you. What state of mind will that lead to?

Christians are warned that as the Israelites suffered because of their lust, idolatry, fornication, that we too must take heed. This is that word 'nouthesis' again. It is for our admonition. Take heed lest you fall. As for Deuteronomy Chapter 28, do we really want to risk that? Many do and they are suffering for it. Many are 'sick and many sleep not discerning the body of Christ'. We come back to that point, that our walk is critical to our relationship with our God and that our neglect of that relationship has real consequences. Salvation is not something that is static. Salvation is not a one off, tick the box life experience. Salvation must be out worked. Salvation has consequences in the way we lead our lives. It is the daily workout that we cannot afford to neglect. Heb 2:3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation.

Those people in the assembly of Laodicea were blind to the truth, naked in their own selfrighteousness and rich in the things of the world. They are warned to get their priorities sorted. They need Jesus on the inside, they need the righteousness of Christ on the inside, they need Christ on the inside to give them clear vision, they need Christ's riches. Eph 3:8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; Eph 3:9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

If we get worship wrong, if we are negligent, if we are careless, if we are self-obsessed, worshipping the creature more than the Creator, it has consequences. It is another explanation as to why men suffer in their minds. It will bring suffering and distress. Rom 2:7 To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: Rom 2:8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Rom 2:9 Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;

Next we will explore how we develop our spiritual relationship with Christ.

39. Peace giver.

We have talked much about the need for the Lordship of Christ in our lives and how so many things can diminish the power of that relationship and cause us personal suffering. There is a further relationship that we have not discussed and that is how the person of the Holy Spirit works in our lives to establish the Lordship of Christ. Rom 8:10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. Rom 8:11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

We shall hardly do justice to the person of the Holy Spirit in a single study but our purpose is to examine the role of the Spirit in the believer's mind. The subject is further clouded by the fact that many teachings relating to the Holy Spirit are heavily influenced by personal experiences. Some manifestation or experience occurs in a believer's life and they dig around in Scripture for a text that best fits their case. 'Speaking in tongues' as a religious experience is such an example. It is pointless to say that a person has not had a genuine experience and since it is personal, it is very hard for someone outside of the experience to give an explanation of what has happened. It could be godly, demonic, self-generated, or delusional. What is more important is, "what do the Scriptures lead us to expect", not what some other Christian leads us to expect?

There are those who consider that the Holy Spirit did not appear until the NT and that Jesus was not in the OT. They are very wrong. David was indwelt by the Holy Spirit, *Psa 51:11 Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me*. The Israelites were fed by Christ in the OT, 1Co 10:4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

The Holy Spirit was active in the OT but so also was the devil. Both work in the lives of men but they do not work together. This leads to two sorts of possession, we can be possessed by the devil or we can be possessed by the Holy Spirit. King Saul oscillated between the two, 1Sa 16:14 But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him. 1Sa 16:15 And Saul's servants said unto him, Behold now, an evil spirit from God troubleth thee. Is that what we might expect in the NT? To understand what is happening requires us to look at the work of the Holy Spirit from a number of perspectives.

Empowerment. The 'Spirit of the Lord' often comes upon people to enable them to accomplish some extraordinary work. They are empowered for some special act but it may not be a permanent power, as with Samson, *Jdg 14:19* And **the Spirit of the LORD came upon him**, and he went down to Ashkelon, and slew thirty men of them, and took their spoil, and gave change of garments unto them which expounded the riddle. And his anger was kindled, and he went up to his father's house.

Saul was named among the prophets, 1Sa 10:6 And the Spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man. Jesus announces His authority in the Spirit, Luk 4:18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised. Pentecost is another example, Act 2:4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

The Holy Spirit works **regeneration and conversion** in us. Act 3:19 Repent ye therefore, **and be converted**, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; Regeneration and the New Birth are both OT teachings. Joh 3:5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of **the Spirit**, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God....... Joh 3:9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Joh 3:10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

Clearly those under the first covenant were born 'of water and the Spirit' and entered the Kingdom of God. The nation Israel was the Kingdom of God but Jesus would give it to others, *Mat 21:42 Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Mat 21:43 Therefore say I unto you, The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. That kingdom is no longer of this world, <i>Joh 18:36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. So we enter into the Kingdom of God just as they did in the OT, except the kingdom has relocated. <i>Eph 2:6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus*:

Perhaps a more controversial issue is whether the Spirit dwelt permanently or temporarily in the OT saint. It is clear that the Spirit dwelt in men *Num 27:18 And the LORD said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit,* and lay thine hand upon him; Dan 4:8 But at the last Daniel came in before me, whose name was Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods (rendered God elsewhere): and before him I told the dream. This raises another important question, "What then is the difference in the operation of the Spirit of God between the OT and the NT?"

I think that it is this. In the OT, sin had not been completely dealt with in the soul. People continued to offer sacrifices for sin because they felt guilt. They had a continual conscience about sin. Heb 9:7 But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: Heb 9:8 The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: Heb 9:9 Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; Christ removes that guilty conscience, Heb 9:14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? As Wesley observed, "No condemnation now I dread".

In Romans, Paul looks at the life of an Israelite under the law, Rom 7:22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: Rom 7:23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. Rom 7:24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death....... Rom 7:25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. Rom 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Rom 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

Rom 6:14 For sin **shall not have dominion over you**: for ye are not under the law, but under grace How does that all become a reality in us? It comes because we now have Christ indwelling in us by the Spirit of God.

The OT saint viewed Christ from a distance. Heb 11:13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Those promises were held in Christ, Gal 3:16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of

many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. We now have the reality of the promises because we have Christ. We have Christ in us dwelling by the Spirit of God, the Comforter. Joh 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Joh 14:17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. Joh 14:18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

How you ask, do we know that we have the Spirit of God in us? Joh 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.......Joh 15:26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: Joh 15:27 And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

One aspect of the indwelling Spirit is the individual's attitude to Christ. He is now in our mind, in remembrance, in our hearts and consequently there is a change in our lives. There was a time when we neither wanted Christ or loved Him. Now He is our hearts desire. 1Jn 3:24 And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us. We call this assurance. Col 2:2 That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;

That word 'understanding' is important. I do not think that an unbeliever 'understands' Christ. Religious people will give all sorts of ideas about Christ as a person, that He is a good person to follow, an example, a person who came to show us a way to God that He provides us with a set of values for life. The believer has made a transition from death to life. 1Jn 3:14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. He has understood that he was dead, Eph 2:1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins. More than that, he has understood that he was in sin, mired up to his neck. He understands that he has been brought to life, quickened by God and that he has crossed a line from death to life. It is a deep conviction in the soul, a subjective realisation that Christ died for me, not simply that Christ died for sin in general.

We know God in a way that we never knew Him before. His word opens up like a flower to reveal its beauty. It becomes an essential part of our life, a light to our feet and a lamp to our path and His blood rains upon our walk. 1Jn 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. Whereas once we were blind to the things of God, they are now revealed in all their glory and we find God speaking to us through His word. 1Jn 5:20 And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. People who have come to Christ as Saviour have a personal testimony that shows a journey into life with Christ. If we had a genuine encounter with Christ, we have a story to tell.

I warn that a so called 'spiritual' experience, a dream, a vision, a prophecy, speaking in other languages is no proof of the Spirit, without the saving work of the Spirit. Mat 7:22 Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in your name? Didn't we force out demons and do

many miracles by the power and authority of your name?' Mat 7:23 Then I will tell them publicly, 'I've never known you. Get away from me, you evil people.' GW. I have no idea how disobedient people came to be in possession of those capabilities but they were no proof of life in Christ. Why? Because the people were never subject to Christ. Jesus was never Lord over their lives. Mat 7:21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Obedience is a mark of the Spirit, not merely talking about right and wrong, but doing it.

What people do we become when we have the Spirit of God? *Eph 5:18* And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but **be filled with the Spirit**; What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit? Let me put it another way, **"What does the Spirit fill you with?"** Rom 8:5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. Rom 8:6 For to be carnally minded is death; but **to be spiritually minded is life and peace**. It is clearly not carnal things that fill the believer, things of the flesh desired by our natural man. 1Co 2:14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

The spiritual mind is a mind at peace with God, "but to be spiritually minded is life and peace". Why then should a soul at peace with God have any problems in his mind? How can I claim to be at peace if I have anguish, fear, anger, bitterness, hatred and so on, in me? It is inconsistent with the claim to be at peace with God. Rom 14:17 For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. How then are we to reconcile this idea of 'peace' with the fact that we shall have problems in this life? Joh 16:33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. We are kept at peace 'IN Christ' in a world of troubles. In a world of 'pressure' for so the word tribulation means, we shall be at peace.

Rom 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: Rom 5:2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Rom 5:3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; Rom 5:4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope: Rom 5:5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

In the Spirit, we have life. Rom 8:11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Paul contrasts the life of the flesh with the life of the Spirit. Gal 5:19 Now, the effects of the corrupt nature are obvious: illicit sex, perversion, promiscuity, Gal 5:20 idolatry, drug use, hatred, rivalry, jealousy, angry outbursts, selfish ambition, conflict, factions, Gal 5:21 envy, drunkenness, wild partying, and similar things. I've told you in the past and I'm telling you again that people who do these kinds of things will not inherit the Kingdom of God. Gal 5:22 But the spiritual nature produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, Gal 5:23 gentleness, and self-control. There are no laws against things like that. GW. This is the fruit of the Spirit, the consequences resulting from the indwelling Spirit. The type of tree we are is shown by the fruit that we produce in our lives. Peace is an outward display of the Spirit, however that must be

accompanied by some additional qualities. Spiritual peace does not exist in isolation from biblical spirituality as we shall see.

How do we get that spiritual nature? Consider how did you derived that fleshly nature? How do you become an adulterer, angry, idolater and the other corrupt works of the flesh? It is because that is what your nature desires. You do not walk into these things blindly. They are the desires of the heart, calling you, asking you to indulge them, creating imaginations, images in your mind, feelings in your flesh, leading you from the thoughts to the deeds. The mind dwells on these evils and feeds them, fuels them, encourages them to the point where people who do these things think that they are quite normal. Rom 1:32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

The spiritual nature comes also by what we desire, what we feed upon, where our heart is set. *Mat* 6:19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: Mat 6:20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: Mat 6:21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. It is obvious that those who set their hearts on the corruptible things of this life do themselves little good. Someone wisely noted, "Tell me what you eat and I will tell you what you are".

What do we feed our soul upon? Solomon sang, Son 2:16 My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies. Jesus said of Solomon, in all his majestic glory, that he was never as well dressed as these lilies, Mat 6:29 But I say that not even Solomon in all his majesty was dressed like one of these flowers. GW. Jesus turned from his crowd to point out these lilies growing wild in the fields about them, "consider them". Did they relate this back to Solomon's Song and realise that they were feeding with the beloved among the lilies? This tells us that our beloved feeds in that glory of God's creation and it is where we too should feed with Him. What a difference to the prodigal son who fed among the pigs. If we are what we eat, it is also important who we eat with.

What is a spiritual person? You may think that people who spend hours in prayer, good works, Bible study, serving the church, people who are nice, qualify as spiritual. I came across this definition from a relationship expert¹⁰²:

Being a spiritual person is synonymous with being a person whose highest priority is to be loving to yourself and others. A spiritual person cares about people, animals and the planet. A spiritual person knows that we are all One, and consciously attempts to honor this Oneness. A spiritual person is a kind person.

So, you can go to church every Sunday and say your prayers every day, without caring about loving yourself, others and the planet. You can practice yoga and meditate every day without being conscious of what is loving and what is not loving in your thoughts and actions. You can belong to a spiritual group and devotedly follow the teachings, yet still be judgmental toward yourself and others in your daily life.

There are many people who do not practice a religion, who do not meditate, pray or belong to any group, who are very spiritual people. These people naturally do caring

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/margaret-paul-phd/what-does-it-mean-to-be-a 12 b 8855220.html

things for others. They think about how they can help. Their thoughts are kind rather than judgmental toward themselves and toward others. When you look at them, you see kindness in their eyes."

I can smell the candles and see the magic crystals of the self obsessed 'new agers' that believe this wishy washy rubbish. It is not biblical. These are not the mark of a spiritual person and you could not tell what a spiritual person is by what they do but **by what they believe**. 1Co 14:37 If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. Spirituality is inextricably linked to God's word. People who disagree that the apostolic writings do not carry the weight of God's truth are not spiritual people. The Word of God is the touchstone of spirituality and the border line of carnality. Spiritual people are obedient people. People who not only live the life but want to live the life. People who undermine the Pauline teachings are not spiritual and they are not Christian because they do not acknowledge "the commandments of the Lord".

The world that we live in looks at spirituality as the search for religious experience, in the Bible it is the search for God's word. 2Th 2:13 But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: 2Th 2:14 Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2Th 2:15 Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle

The word of God will dwell 'richly' in the people of God. The God of Peace will send the Prince of Peace by His Spirit to live IN those who are right with Him and they will be found in their right minds. Php 4:6 Never worry about anything. But in every situation let God know what you need in prayers and requests while giving thanks. Php 4:7 Then God's peace, which goes beyond anything we can imagine, will guard your thoughts and emotions through Christ Jesus. GW.

I close this section with the question, how can anyone who has been forgiven, who has God's Spirit in him, the peace of God upon him, have any permanent mental problems?

40. Counselling Job

PLEASE READ JOB before reading this study. The story of Job brings together many of the elements that we have considered during our study on healing. It includes demonization (the satanic influence upon the mind and body of a believer), physical illness, mental oppression (depression, suicidal thoughts, despair) and counselling. The narrative considers the questions that we have about the reasons for human suffering. You must ask yourself in conclusion whether that is answered? You must also ask what the real purpose of the story of our brother Job really is?

If we are correct to assume that the 'Job' mentioned in Genesis is the same person whose story is told in the book of Job, then we are dealing with a descendent of Jacob (Israel). *Gen 46:13 And the sons of Issachar; Tola, and Phuvah, and Job, and Shimron*. Rabbinic tradition attributes the authorship of the book to Moses which would make sense, since Job would be a contemporary of the patriarchs and Moses. When Job enters his trial, we find four so called friends counsel him. They have become known as Job's comforters but I think that is far from the case. If they are 'comforters' at all, they are 'miserable comforters'. *Job 16:2 I have heard many such things: miserable comforters*

are ye all. The family also turn up in the end although they are nowhere to be seen at the beginning. Perhaps we shall be charitable and suggest that they lived far away and by the time the news arrived the trial was over.

The 'friends' of Job might be the relatives of Jacob's fraternal twin brother Esau. Gen 36:10 These are the names of Esau's sons; Eliphaz the son of Adah the wife of Esau, Reuel the son of Bashemath the wife of Esau. Gen 36:11 And the sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho, and Gatam, and Kenaz. The people of Teman were wise, Jer 49:7 Concerning Edom, thus saith the LORD of hosts; Is wisdom no more in Teman? is counsel perished from the prudent? is their wisdom vanished? The Shuhite was probably the descendent of Abraham, Gen 25:1 Then again Abraham took a wife, and her name was Keturah. Gen 25:2 And she bare him Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah. It is not clear where Zophar comes from. The fourth 'counsellor' is Elihu. Job 32:3 Also against his three friends was his wrath kindled, because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job. Job 32:4 Now Elihu had waited till Job had spoken, because they were elder than he. Perhaps the Lord ignores Elihu when the rebukes are handed out because he is a neophyte, yet what he says is closest to the truth about Job's situation?

Is Job really about "Why the righteous suffer?" Job suffers but gets no explanation at the end. He is not told why he has had to go through the losses and suffering. Even Job does not raise that issue with the Lord at the end. It is not even clear whether Job was given the 'prequel' about satan's evil plan against him and there is also no record that God gave Job understanding, indeed, satan is written out of the credits when it comes to Job's trial. After all, God let the devil loose and He is happy to have that recorded. Job 42:11 Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold. Yes, in those days they made no excuses for God bringing evil, trying to rationalise it away.

It is however, no explanation to say that God does not bring evil upon us when He clearly does. *Isa* 45:7 I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things. If evil is a consequence of Divine neglect, that it happens without God seeing it coming and having no control of it, we do injury to His Omniscience and Omnipotence. God makes it.

Unless we know to the contrary, we also cannot say that evil comes as a judgement, although it may do, Jos 23:15 Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all good things are come upon you, which the LORD your God promised you; so shall **the LORD bring upon you all evil things**, until he have destroyed you from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you. Jos 23:16 When ye have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them; then shall the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you.

We must also guard against the idea that if we receive good, we **must** receive evil of the Lord, *Job* 2:10 But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? This is not a proof text of a 'ying yang' providence, the balance of good with evil. It is a statement that we cannot criticise what the Lord gives us, since we should be of a mind to **'receive'** both good and evil.

Did Job ever find out or was the prequel (the council of the sons of God) added by the narrator, writing in the Spirit? At that stage, would it have really mattered? Explanations do not always soften the pain suffered or erase the memory, although it can make it possible to live with, and it was better to think of God's hand in the matter rather than satan's. I can also hardly think that what is restored to Job, is done by way of Divine compensation nor that we should expect any compensation if we suffer in this life. I do not see that a new family would in any way lessen the suffering that he must have carried for the rest of his life, over the loss of his children. The fact that God took them and later replaces them is no explanation. Job's newly restored life cannot substitute for the love and relationships that he has cared for and lost but perhaps that is another lesson about the preciousness and frailty of this life.

The statement, Job 42:12 So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: cannot mean that what Job had in his later life was better than what he had at the beginning because he loved what he had in the beginning. Love is not poured away and the cup merely refilled. It simply states that Job, by God's grace, had marginally more at the end than he started with at the beginning of his life. It states that Job was blessed at the beginning and he has some more blessings at the end. It says nothing about whether Job valued the blessings at the end more than those blessings at the beginning and why should he?

The idea that we have a God who beats us up and then compensates us for the thrashing, is a hellish idea. He is bringing us closer to Himself by the chastening that we receive. Heb 12:5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: Heb 12:6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. That word 'chastening' is also rendered nurture and instruction. As for scourging, do we need it is as Christians? It seems we do because we are stubborn creatures clinging to that 'old man' that corpse of our former self. There are times when we need that scourge to help us moult our old sinful skin. It is par for the course and heaven knows we need it in the midst of our sinful and complacent lives. It is a mark of love that shows us how far we are removed from the mind of God. Rev 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.

We are not suggesting at the start of the story of Job, that he was a paragon of virtue in all respects, sinlessly perfect, but he was head and shoulders above his generation, an upright man in the eyes of God. Job 1:8 And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? The story of Job is about a man who, through suffering, grew into a better man, a stronger man and a more godly man. He also learned a lot more about his Creator. Stress and tribulation are environments that make us hardy, that make us grow stronger. This is a truth that you will see in nature also.

How will Christians develop character if their lives are one continual comfort, sorrow-less, painless, deathless, privileged and healthy. Yet that is not what our Father has promised us and indeed we have to beg Him to deliver us from the 'evil one' because life in a sinful world is not normal, it is hard. Isa 57:20 But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. Isa 57:21 There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. We may have received the forgiveness of sin but we have not been stripped of our sin. That is the process of sanctification and

it is a hard road. We are in transition, putting off the old man, putting on the new man, renewing our minds daily. What happens to us is part of that working which will be good for us.

Is part of Job's spiral into despair due in a large part to the 'miserable comforters'? I have seen these people in the churches. They are the people who can give you an explanation of what is wrong with you by just looking at you. They do not have to ask questions, they have this uncanny ability of being able to make a snap judgement. They do not even ask if you want help. These useless counsellors may use 'Bible speak' but they are in sin and presumption. They need forgiving themselves. Job 42:7 And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. Job 42:8 Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job.

Jobs 'comforters', 'counsellors', call them what you will, are little different from the 'psychotherapists' of today. They have their standard tick box approach, full of guesses, hopeful monsters that try to get behind the mystery of providence. They probe the subject of depression with such broad questions, "Have you had a poor appetite or been overeating?" What does that mean. If you do the NHS questionnaire, even if you return a low score, you will probably be a candidate for treatment:

"Based on your responses today it's very likely that you could be suffering from some form of depression but only an experienced health professional can tell for sure. You should make an appointment to see your GP as soon as possible or call NHS 111. They will be able to help you and offer some form of treatment."

Based on presuppositions, like Job's counsellors, they proceed to offer a diagnosis. What these useless counsellors failed to do, before they came over to Job with their advice was to ask the Lord for understanding. It makes sense that if we are going to act on behalf of the Lord, that we consult Him first before we talk to the patient? It is called 'enquiring of the Lord'. Job is aware of this, Job 13:1 Lo, mine eye hath seen all this, mine ear hath heard and understood it. Job 13:2 What ye know, the same do I know also: I am not inferior unto you. Job 13:3 Surely I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God. Job 13:4 But ye are forgers of lies, ye are all physicians of no value.

Yet we might question, what if the 'counsellors' never showed up? Would Job have been better off? Did he need these ill informed men to add to his distress? They are in turn rebuked by the Lord so it is questionable that they had any other value than to be an example of "How not to do it". Like most experts, they all had different ideas about why Job is in the situation he is and they are all wrong.

Let us turn away from Job for a moment and look at these wretched individuals. Was there a lesson for them? Was the suffering of Job a lesson for them and for us, more than for Job? I think that it is, because Job's suffering is a type of Christ? I think that Job knows more of His Creator than his companions. Job 42:7 And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD

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¹⁰³ http://www.nhs.uk/Tools/Pages/depression.aspx

said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.

These people who were so ready to give advice, had not understood the nature and purpose of God. They are like many of us, bathed in ignorance of the meaning of life and the nature of God. Not all suffering, we are taught by Job, is on account of our sinful nature, a punishment for our own wickedness. Some afflictions are there to display the righteousness of God. 1Pe 3:18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: The point that I am making is that Jesus did not have to suffer but elected to die for His people. His suffering declared God's righteousness, God's justice. Rom 3:25 whom God has set forth a mercy-seat, through faith in his blood, for the shewing forth of his righteousness, in respect of the passing by the sins that had taken place before, through the forbearance of God; Rom 3:26 for the shewing forth of his righteousness in the present time, so that he should be just, and justify him that is of the faith of Jesus. Darby. Job prefigures the suffering of Christ because it speaks of the nature of God Himself.

This I think is the main purpose behind the book of Job. The story of Job is a story about the omnipotent God. It is a story that we are all too ready to hijack to our own circumstances. There is a cast of men and demons, but the main character is the Sovereign Lord. The script is wrung out to the point where we understand that truth and Job played his suffering part to show the triumph of the Revelation of the Creator. Let us not forget that. We arrogantly ask "Why does God let us suffer?" but we should ask "Why does God suffer us?" The book of Job answers both questions.

Whenever we read Scripture, we should learn to see, firstly, what it says about our God. Jesus always comes first. What we prefer to do with Scripture is to slot our own situation in, shoe horn our needs into a Bible story in the hope that we will get the good outcome that the story illustrates. We are using Scripture firstly to answer our own needs ahead of our service of the Lord.

From Job chapter 38 onwards we are given a short curriculum vitae, the course of life of the Creator. It is a lesson to evolutionists and creationists that we merely guess at the great works of the Creator, attempting to pin our explanations on events and purposes for which we did not see their origins. Likewise we are equally blind to that powerful guiding hand of which we know next to nothing.

Jehovah asks Job, Job 38:2 Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Job returns to answer, Job 42:3 Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. Job 42:3 "You said, 'Who is this that belittles my advice without having any knowledge about it?' Yes, I have stated things I didn't understand, things too mysterious for me to know. GW. Before we start moaning about why God does things and putting our puny blind interpretations upon Providence, we should talk to God first.

We learn more when God is in the conversation. Job 40:2 Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? Job 40:8 Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous? Self-righteousness and self-pity are not the marks of the man who understands the decrees of God. Rom 3:4 God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

Job has to confess his error after the Lord confronts him. Job 42:3 Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. Job 42:4 Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. Job 42:5 I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth **thee**. Job 42:6 Wherefore I abhor myself, and **repent** in dust and ashes.

We could have had the book of Job solely from his experience and perspective, a solitary account of a man with a terrible skin condition 104 who has lost his family and his possessions. A man whose life spirals into destruction and despair. The skin inflammation or irritation could have been inflicted through the demonic stress placed in Job's life.

It is quite possible that Job would have come to an earlier resolution of his condition than he did, by direct revelation from his Maker. Job suffered right up to the point of resolution, to where he understood the purpose of his God. He did not need ignorant men wasting his time. They contributed nothing to his welfare and exacerbate his condition. Of course the story would have been shorter and less informative but the point that I make is that what ever you wrap around the narrative, Job's triumph is through his increased understanding of his God. The only third party Job needed was Jehovah, not a bunch of 'guessers'. Job had been brought to an acceptance of his state of grace before God and there it could have ended without any additional blessings.

God alone knows the heart of men, 2Ch 6:30 Then hear thou from heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and render unto every man according unto all his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou only knowest the hearts of the children of men:) Unless we can prophesy, unless we have God's word in our mouth we must remain silent.

If Job gives us a lesson about counselling it is this. If you do not understand what you are dealing with, do not guess, do no throw random texts at the sufferer, shut up! Shut up! You may be going up against God. There is something that you can do in that situation which these four comforters did not and that is tend to what you can see. Did any offer Job balm for his boils, water for his lips, an arm around him to comfort him? Dead faith never helped anyone. Jas 2:15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, Jas 2:16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Jas 2:17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

I am reminded of 'God's gentleman' who thoughtfully helped Jeremiah, Jer 38:12 And Ebedmelech the Ethiopian said unto Jeremiah, Put now these old cast clouts and rotten rags under thine armholes under the cords. And Jeremiah did so. Jer 38:13 So they drew up Jeremiah with cords, and took him up out of the dungeon: Dear Ebedmelech was a model for the good Samaritan.

These counsellors, companions, these so called 'comforters' are the Pharisees of the day. They bask in their own righteousness and look down upon the sinner. Luk 18:11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. They speak for God as if they are equal to the situation but they are not. Be

¹⁰⁴ What Job had been through could have triggered his skin condition. It is the 'science' of Psychodermatogy. Job 2:7 Satan left and caused painful sores to break out all over Job's body--from head to toe.

very careful how you use what these men say. Just because it is written in the Bible does not make it right thinking (any more than what satan says to Eve).

Would Job have suffered less if he had understood the Lord better? I think that he would. He might not have been tormented with self-pity and despair. Like Jesus, he would have endured because of his vision of the future. Heb 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. Thomas Brookes, the Puritan wrote about "The mute Christian smarting under the rod", as a comment on Psalm 119:71 It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes. Suffering for the saint has a purpose.

God did not apologise to Job for his suffering. He did not say thank you Job, for helping me make a point with satan. He did not explain why He did it. He did not ask Job for forgiveness, indeed it is blasphemous to even think that God needs forgiving. Job was collateral in a sinful world and we must accept that. Bemoaning 'why God allows it' is pointless unless He tells you. What we can say is that if we did not see or appreciate the love of God through the trial, we did not look hard enough.

I hope that you also noticed that there is no record that Job was physically healed by the Lord. Did he just recover naturally after the trial was over? Healing is not what the story is about. It was not really about Job's terrible suffering. It does look at how we deal with suffering but above all how we maintain our relationship with the Lord through suffering. Job had moved from mere intellectual knowledge into the real presence of God. He had learned a great truth about the Sovereign God. He had also learned that the Lord is not hurried and through this is he learned patience.

Jas 5:10 Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Jas 5:11 Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of **the patience of Job**, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

41. A Samaritan strategy for the mind

It is not good enough for us Christians to criticise people, even unbelievers who are trying to help people who appear to have issues that affect their physical or mental state. People with anxiety, fear, stress, sadness, grief, depression and many other of life's problems are I suggest deserving of help, even if they are unbelievers. I say this because it is part of the care that a Christian shows, not just for his brothers and sisters but also for his enemies.

I reason this because I see compassion as a quality that Christ forms in us. The story of the "Good Samaritan", you will recall, was an answer to the question of neighbourliness. "Who are our neighbours?" The neighbour of course was the Samaritan, not the wounded man, Luk 10:36 Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? Luk 10:37 And he said, **He that shewed mercy** on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

There it is, the exhortation to each of us to be a good Samaritan, a neighbour to those in trouble, a person who is filled with compassion, *Luk 10:33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him.* It is not a case of doing it because

we have to, out of cold duty. It is something that we should have some passion about. Compassion in part is suffering with the sufferer. Compassion is the humane quality of understanding the suffering of others and wanting to do something about it. I will go further and suggest that compassion is the virtue of meeting the needs of another through Christ. If we do things to meet the need in us (being guilty about not giving, 'atoning' for our own excess, etc) that is not compassion, it is selfishness. It is not dissimilar to wanting someone healed because it makes us feel better, not the sick person.

Compassion recognises a true victim and compassion also realises that you are not helping the person who can help themselves, but will not. The person who is unwilling to help themselves such as the indolent, selfish, greedy and shiftless, 2Th 3:10 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. As Wesley observed, "Do not maintain him in idleness". Compassion is regulated by the Word of God and righteousness has rules of which one is about not being compassionate, where it does not lead to improving the life of the individual before God. People have lost sight of this today, for example, they tolerate fornication under the banner of showing kindness and not being 'judgemental'. Paul delivers a fornicator to the devil. Compassion is not giving for giving sake, putting a coin in a charity box, it is giving in Jesus Name and that should distinguish our compassion.

The Samaritan's compassion in the Bible, extended to the physical welfare of the individual but what about his mental welfare? The Samaritan took the injured man to a hostel. It is sad if the best that we could do for someone with a problem of the mind, is to take them to a pub (public house) and pay their expenses until they recovered? Of course, the story of the Samaritan is not about how we evangelise or how we deal with mental issues, it is about how we show neighbourliness to the helpless. Supposing however, that we came across a person in mental distress, how would we deal with them? I see no reason to neglect this aspect of the person, however, I will again remind us that we must in this instance make a distinction between the care of the believer and the care of the unbeliever.

The injuries sustained by the wounded man on the Jericho road would have appeared the same irrespective as to whether the person was a believer or unbeliever. They would have felt the same, looked the same and healed the same. You cannot tell whether a person is a believer or unbeliever from the outward appearance. You do not have one treatment for a believer and another treatment for an unbeliever when it comes to treating the flesh, 'this body of death'. When it comes to issues of the mind it is a far more difficult because there are seldom physical injuries to observe, although there may be certain behaviours that suggest something is wrong.

We have considered that mental disorders may show in some form of strange behaviour. These may result from demonization, guilt from some unresolved sin, a problem resulting from a physiological injury, bereavement, a symptom of some other disease (cancers, tumours etc). Jumping in and thinking that we can diagnose the problem by looking at a person, without divine inspiration, can be very dangerous and may even lead us to be physically injured by a distressed person. This is why we must be very careful if we are to be a good Samaritan of the mind.

Firstly, it is imperative that we have a plan from the Lord and that we have asked for guidance and protection as we seek to help others. If the Lord is not first, guiding us through the situations that we encounter then we are doing things in our own strength and as we know, *Rom 14:23.......for*

whatsoever is not of faith is sin. Peter's seemingly thoughtful defence of Jesus came from the devil and we should learn a lesson from this. Job's friends were useless and ended up being rebuked by the Lord for their ignorant counsel. There is a saying that says 'fools rush in where angels fear to tread'.

It should be quite obvious to us if we are going to involve ourselves in the problems of another, to ask them first if they want help. Some people may not want to tell you "how they are". They do not want an empathetic ear, someone to talk to? If so, that is where you have to leave it and perhaps go and pray about it. I have observed many Christians trying to force an entry into other people's lives, trying to be helpful when they are not wanted, throwing texts at them, without the slightest understanding of their situation. I do not mean that we are ignorant of the fact that the unbeliever needs Christ but I am talking about people who we come into contact with who are suffering fear, depression, anxiety, and so on. These situations are very sensitive and blundering around in the dark, fishing for information, can alienate a person, especially if they have not asked for help. At that stage you are merely a busybody and an interferer.

If we are invited to talk with someone about their problems, it makes sense to ask if they have talked to a doctor (identifying physical issues) and are already being 'treated'. It is also important to understand if they are being medicated as this will affect their responses. We must be careful about conflicting with some ongoing treatment if we do not understand what is being done. Further along in time we might be in a position to make some useful comment if we have a better knowledge of the condition and behaviour of the individual but we must never act in ignorance however well meaning we are.

If you have any doubts about your ability you should definitely involve an elder or more experienced Christian. Additionally I would not recommend that a brother counsel a sister, or a sister counsel a brother for reasons of propriety and the possibility of developing an unhealthy dependency upon the person helping them.

We have not yet answered what is probably the most important question when we desire to help someone. That question is, "Are we dealing with a believer or an unbeliever?"

When we examine that 'black box', the faculty that we call the mind, the processor that produces our thoughts and actions, It is essential to any consideration of helping a troubled soul, that we first understand whether the person before us is a believer, a sinner saved by grace or not. I cannot stress enough how important it is to understand the state of a soul in relation to their Creator.

I think that we may be too quick to accept people as 'Christians' because they go to a church on Sundays, because they pray to God, read their Bible, because they are nice people, good people, because they are religious. I could put a lot of people into those categories **but** when it comes to a saving relationship with Christ, the assurance of forgiveness, the desire for Christ in their lives, the work of the Spirit forming Christ in them, they are absent in an unbeliever. These people may have no desire whatsoever for Christ in their lives, only desiring the peripheral association with some religious community.

You will also find that a person's attitude to the Word of God, the Scripture is another indicator of who you are dealing with. It is not so much that a person acknowledges the Scripture or remembers

large tracts of Scripture, it is that the individual is driven to apply it in their lives. *Psa 119:11 Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee*. The Christian wants to live a life that pleases God and I go further and say that you cannot be a Christian and reject the teachings of Christ and His Apostles as laid out in the Bible.

You will tell a lot about where people stand in relationship with Christ by conversations that you have with them, what they want to talk to you about. At my advanced age, I have no pleasure in trivial conversations and consequently I have to say that I have no friends who are unbelievers. That does not mean that I do not converse with people. However, if Christ cannot be in the conversations that I have with people, I ask myself, "What am I doing there?" I am not saying that we should be impolite or inconsiderate to our neighbours, that we should ignore them, or not talk to them. I am asking what the value of a trivial relationship is where they are not interested in Christ?

If people are not interested in our Saviour, what sort of relationship are we having with them and why? Yes, Jesus went to dinner when invited by sinners but He did not let them dominate the conversation and where they had wrong ideas, He corrected them. Now if we use that as our reason for going with unbelievers, let us use the same method. How many of our worldly acquaintances will lift their eyes up in torment and despise us, because we never brought Christ into the conversations we had with them?

I labour this point because there is nothing that you can do for the unsaved mind unless it is to introduce the person to Christ, because it is only Christ who can heal and renew the mind. You cannot give them the peace that passes all understanding without Christ, *Php 4:7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus*. Kind words and false hope are not a substitute for the truth of Christ.

My conclusion at this point is that if you are not dealing with a Christian, your options are very limited and that is sadly why I believe that so many afflicted souls end up with the psychiatrist and the DSM-5 Bible of disorders. The minds of these unbelieving people are empty as regards the things of God and their minds are alienated, *Eph 4:17 This I say therefore*, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Eph 4:18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

In that statement, we have highlighted the gulf that exists between believers and unbelievers. The rich man and Lazarus were divided in life but just how vast that gulf was, was only seen after death. The person outside of Christ is racing towards the 'unknown', racing towards a black hole, death, relentlessly accelerating towards the grave, without hope, in a Universe without meaning. No wonder people have troubled minds but this should not be so for the Christian.

If you have been invited to help a person who has mental problems, if you have understood the position from a medical perspective, and you have discovered that the person is not a believer, apart from those general kindnesses that we can show to our neighbour, our contribution to their well being comes through introducing them to the Gospel and Jesus Christ. Until that happens, the Bible is a closed book and the precious promises are not theirs to have.

If you are dealing with a 'Christian' who wants your help, you must take time to understand their walk with the Lord. It may seem a paradox that Christians wanting help would not be open with us but that is often the case. It may be through embarrassment, guilt or fear of how they will be perceived that they hide things. They want a painless solution to their problems but that is not always possible. People will often feed you false information to evade confrontation despite the fact that they want help.

This evasiveness may produce what has been called 'halo data', that is, non-verbal communication. This could be as simple as, sweaty palms, gestures, posture, eye movement and just general body language, but it seems to me that what people say may also be 'halo data'. Perhaps an illustration of this is how people generally portray themselves. I call this the 'Fakebook' syndrome. If you look at people's Facebook pages, you will see smiling faces, happy times and scarce think that a thing is wrong in their lives. I know for a fact that many people do this while their personal lives are in a mess and they would be ashamed to show what they are really like.

Facebook is in reality a Fakebook. People in all sorts of sin, violence, marriages falling apart, disobedient to the Lord, whose lives are a mockery of the Gospel, set up a picture to others of their lives and situation, as healthy and happy. They are liars and you must be very careful, if you are involved helping people, that you find out the truth and do not swallow the lie. When things are wrong in someone's life do not take what they say at face value. Dishonesty is a subterfuge when people are in denial of the truth and I do not exempt 'Christians' from this. *Col 3:9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds*;

Why do I say this? It is because most problems come down to sin in our lives and it is sin that is at the heart of the solution. Facing up to sin, being honest about it is hard. I have known many 'Christians' who have never admitted to doing anything wrong. They are always in the right, they have nothing to confess, they are faultless and they do not like criticism. That may be a reason why those people suffer mentally, because they cannot admit what they really are. They cannot see the 'besetting sins' in their lives, Heb 12:1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.

Now I am not saying that everyone suffers solely on account of personal sin, the story of Job makes that quite clear as does Paul's thorn. However, we must run a process of elimination before we can say that. You will notice that Paul, if I may use the metaphor, self medicates and deals with his problem himself. That I think should really be the case for most Christians, so when you have a believer who cannot or will not deal with his own problems, you must pursue a line of enquiry that asks what their personal relationship with Christ is like.

Why do people not self-medicate with the Scripture and how can we help them? What stops them from taking in the exceeding great and precious promise that make us partakers of the divine nature? Why are they not drinking in the Divine remedies? You recall that when Adam and Eve sinned, it was their natural reaction to hide from their Creator. Guilt will do that and sin separates us from Christ. I think that is the reason that people find it hard to deal with their own problems and that is perhaps where we can direct them.

If we have identified the problem and we have a biblical remedy, not those ideas from the sewers of Freud's mind and his descendents, we should see changes as the person is reconciled to Christ. If they fight against the remedy, then there is little you can do and they must continue with the consequences of their own problems.

If you are to provide help for the afflicted, then you must know your Bible. Biblical illiterates are of no use to anyone. Billy Graham made a comment once that someone on their death bed does not call for the bartender but the Pastor. There is something in that. When we are up against the problems of life, we should want to know what God has said on a subject and that is what really matters.

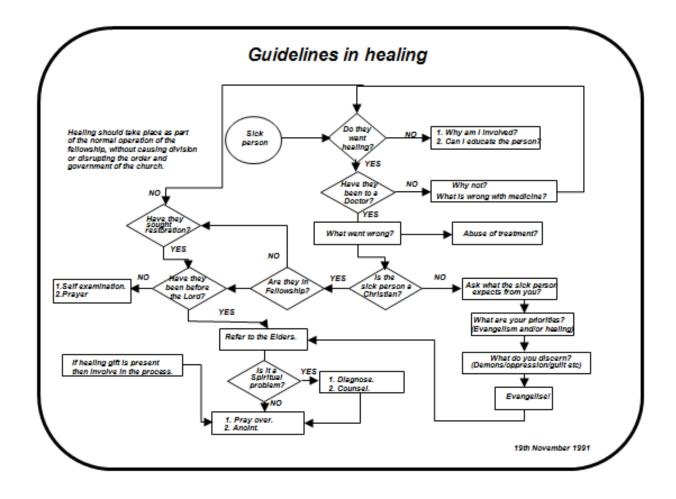
God's promises are for our benefit, 2Pe 1:4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.......Rom 15:4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

I do believe that it is God's will and a promise to all who believe that they will be given a sound mind. 2Ti 1:7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. By that I mean that Jesus promises that He will be with us to deliver us from those cares and fears of life that will cause anxiety. Mat 11:28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Mat 11:29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. Mat 11:30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. Jesus never said "Come unto me all ye that are sick and diseased and I will heal you", but he did say, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest".

That peace of mind can only truly come about in the life of man through the merits of Jesus Christ, Rom 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: Rom 5:2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. It is 'through' Christ that we have peace but outside of Christ, in the life of unbelief, there is no peace. Isa 57:21 There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. That is why you will never cure a soul that is not at peace by using humanist words or drugs. You may desensitise a man, take away his feelings, numb him, anaesthetise his mind, render him senseless in the extreme but you are not curing him.

If we want anything for our fellow man it must be, above all else, to come to know Jesus as Saviour and Redeemer. All else is of little value.

Below is a flowchart we produced years ago on the subject of healing. It is not perfect but is a general guide when approaching the subject.



42. Summary

I had no idea when we started this series, where the Lord would take us and it has been a journey into some uncharted territory, especially the healing of the mind. I thank God that He has seen fit to keep us focused on the issue, which is, that Jesus Christ is the Healer of fallen man. Jesus Christ is the solution to our problems, even if He does not answer us according to our own selfish demands. A lesson has been that life does not revolve around us and our needs and we are creatures who must learn to serve their Creator. It is only then that we will understand the purpose of our lives, that they are not our own but His.

It was after Peter had made his declaration of love to Jesus, that Jesus could tell him of his death. *Joh 21:18 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. Joh 21:19 This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me. Peter would die a horrible death, like his Master, none the less, the task was to follow Him. That same task is upon all who call themselves disciples of Christ, Christians.*

We defined healing as broadly speaking, making someone better. Specifically, it is restoring the function of a part that has malfunctioned, for example the eye, the leg, the hand, the tongue and so forth. In that respect it is quite specific. It is like replacing a damaged component when you get your

PC repaired. The other components are left unchanged and they will continue to run, until they too in turn fail. It is not a complete refurbishment, resetting life's clocks, restoring youth. I do not read that in the process of healing that a person's hair changed back to the colour of their youth, that they lost their wrinkles or that every part of their body underwent a restoration. I do not see that Jesus healed the aging process or regarded it as a disease, indeed our Lord Himself was subject to the aging process as he grew from a babe to a man. It is a process of maturation which may on occasion go badly wrong but aging is not of itself a result of sin.

We have found no reason from the Scriptures that would deny us the belief that our God who healed in times past, no longer heals in our day and age. Miraculous healing does not appear to occur frequently outside of the ministry of Jesus, but it does occur. It occurs in both the Older and the New Testament. One of the gifts of the Spirit in the NT church is 'gifts of healings' (plural) 1Co 12:9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; There is no biblical evidence to suggest that the gifts of the Spirit would cease to exist.

Healing we saw has its limitations. From the **carer perspective**, we may think it far more reasonable for the young to be healed in order to experience a full life, whereas those who are aged have run their course and it seems less reasonable that they should live longer. Yet we are still prepared to spend vast sums of money to wring the last drops of life out of an old person, for whom it is 'only a matter of time' before they pass away. In many respects, today's Christians have a similar view of death to the unbeliever, in that they do not wish to face up to it. They will do anything to delay the inevitable.

For **the sick** it may be another matter altogether. The realisation that a cure is not inevitable, that age, decline and infirmity are inexorably ruining the quality of life, causes its own sadness. There is a remedy laid down by Solomon. *Ecc 12:1 Keep your Creator in mind while you are young! In years to come, you will be burdened down with troubles and say, "I don't enjoy life anymore." <i>Ecc 12:2 Someday the light of the sun and the moon and the stars will all seem dim to you. Rain clouds will remain over your head. Ecc 12:3 Your body will grow feeble, your teeth will decay, and your eyesight fail. Ecc 12:4 The noisy grinding of grain will be shut out by your deaf ears, but even the song of a bird will keep you awake. Ecc 12:5 You will be afraid to climb up a hill or walk down a road. Your hair will turn as white as almond blossoms. You will feel lifeless and drag along like an old grasshopper. We each go to our eternal home, and the streets are filled with those who mourn. Ecc 12:6 The silver cord snaps, the golden bowl breaks; the water pitcher is smashed, and the pulley at the well is shattered. Ecc 12:7 So our bodies return to the earth, and the life-giving breath returns to God. CEV.*

What we asked, was the point in keeping people alive in order to prolong their suffering, especially if they decline help? We asked ourselves, "Do we really want to ease a person's suffering, or do we just want to keep them alive for life's sake?" We read of the doctor who despaired that sometimes our feeble attempts to alleviate suffering merely prolonged it. What virtue is it that pain must be endured for its own sake, that a slow and painful death is somehow a good death? We would not keep a suffering dog alive. Was giving up on life, passively or actively, such a sin? Are there occasions when euthanasia or suicide might be justified to reduce suffering, not just the suffering of the sick but for the sake of the suffering carers of the sick? Yet we can understand that a person whose

prospect is hell would not wish to go a moment too soon, but for a believer it cannot come soon enough.

I do not hear Christians talking much to each other about death. They do not talk about how they may or may not want to die, how they want their body disposed of, what sort of memorial or service they might (or might not) want to have. They should start to open up on the issue because it will happen and it is unfair to put someone in the position of an administrator, who has to second guess what you want. In fact it is selfishness in the extreme.

Once upon a time people prepared for death as Jeremy Taylor's book "Holy Dying" encouraged. It was written in the mid-1600's, a time where plague and death were rampant and remedies unknown. The chapters give an indication of the subject, "A General Preparation towards a holy and blessed death, Consideration of the Vanity and Shortness of Man's Life, Consideration of the Miseries of Man's Life, A General Preparation towards a holy and blessed Death, Three Precepts preparatory to a holy Death, etc".

Wesley knew this work and it was said of Methodists that, "Our people die well" because the early Methodists were known for their "good deaths." A physician who treated several Methodists made the claim to Charles Wesley, "Most people die for fear of dying; but, I never met with such people as yours. They are none of them afraid of death, but are calm, and patient, and resigned to the last." Today we cling to the surgeon's gown, rather than the hem of Christ's garment.

Death is inevitable and the permanence of healing and its extent is debatable. The healing of one form of cancer for example, does not imply future immunity from all cancers. The healing of blindness does not imply that it would not return at a later date, or that the person healed would not get some other ailment. Illness brought about by sin may recur, *Joh 5:14 Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.* We should not view healing as a permanent solution to life's problems or indeed that it is permanent.

Being healed of one malady does not mean that you are healed of ALL maladies and being healed does not confer immortality. We have seen that there is no record of any person who has been the recipient of any healing, whether miraculous or natural, living forever on this earth. Even Lazarus would have gone back to the grave. The reality is that we die and that is the great fact of life. Wherever we go, death will always go with us and it is written, *Heb 9:27 it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment*: The reality of life is that while Christ might intervene in our lives to make us on occasion 'better' we must still go down to the grave.

I would hope that our studies have given us a more realistic attitude to both life and death. Perhaps I should put it another way, that we have a more realistic attitude to Christianity and that our expectations as Christians are based firmly upon the Word of God, that we have not constructed a life view whose expectations are based on humanist fantasies. The idea that life must be fair and painless, a nice world where everybody is really good and only bad things happen to bad people, is not a biblical view.

Life can bring pain but we saw that even pain has a purpose. It was, as one brother put it, "God's gift". If we lived in a world without pain we would almost certainly damage ourselves permanently and shorten our lives. We saw this reality in the lives of lepers. Was pain a part of Jesus original design or mankind? Of course it was since the whole nervous system and central processing was part of the original design. If Adam had walked into a tree, he would have felt it. If he stubbed his toe against a stone, he would have felt it. Pain helps us to understand the environment but it may not have been such a severe sensation before the fall.

When we have pain, perhaps we Christians should view it not so much as a curse but as a blessing, for it brings us closer to understanding the suffering of Christ on our behalf. Now I can understand in part, "what pain he had to bear and we believe it was for us, He hung and suffered there". Pain is in a sense redemptive. It warns us of the dangers of life and the damage to our person. The pain of Christ does the same in the spirit. The leper cleansed was delivered back the gift of pain so that he might understand the suffering that made his deliverance possible.

Does every ailment that we get need healing? We tried to identify what conditions in this life were normal and what needed healing. Pain is normal, aging is normal. Dare we suggest that many of the physiological differences between us humans are things that need healing? Do we really need healing because we are going deaf with age or do we just need a few minor corrections to make life liveable. Do we compensate by learning sign language or getting a hearing aid? These after all are in a manner of speaking 'healing' but the aches and pains of age are just signs that we are approaching life's end. I never read that Jesus replaced lost limbs, mended broken bones and so I am assuming that the healings He did were quite specific and some things we just have to live with. Is a one legged Christian a lesser person than a two legged Christian? Is a short Christian better than a tall Christian?

Perhaps we Christians have to learn to live with the aging process and make the best of our declining years because we never saw that Jesus healed age. Perhaps we should consider that He wants us to get to glory sooner than later.

We saw that disease was in part a consequence of sin and the fall. Humanity is also degenerating genetically. Dr Hayflick observed that once a cell reaches the end of its life span, it undergoes a programmed cellular death called apoptosis. This end point was called the Hayflick limit or the maximum life span. Dr John Sanford, the molecular biologist has also observed that the very code of life, the genome, the DNA code store, is itself degenerating and corrupting with each generation.

Genetic Entropy is most easily understood on a personal level. In our bodies there are roughly 3 new mutations (word-processing errors), every cell division. Our cells become more mutant, and more divergent from each other every day. By the time we are old, each of our cells has accumulated tens of thousands of mutations. Mutation accumulation is the primary reason we grow old and die. This level of genetic entropy is easy to understand. Not only do we undergo genetic degeneration personally, we also are undergoing genetic degeneration as a population. This is essentially evolution going the wrong way, it is devolution. Natural selection can slow down, but cannot stop Genetic Entropy on the population level. Jesus does not work against this law of degeneration and we will die.

Sin has made death a necessity however that death is brought about. Sin and death are inextricably linked, embracing each other as they spiral towards the grave, *Rom 5:12 Wherefore*, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: With two exceptions in the Bible, Enoch and Elijah, men die and return to dust. It is the curse of God upon Adam's sin, *Gen 3:19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*

Should we pray for healing for others? Jas 5:16 So admit your sins to each other, and pray for each other so that you will be healed. Prayers offered by those who have God's approval are effective. GW. People clearly want the second part of that verse but seldom do the first part. Are the two parts linked? I would suggest that where we are praying for healing, in some circumstances, there is the necessity for the confession of sin, since that may be the cause of the sickness. If it is not due to sin, then the sick person is directed to the elders of the church, Jas 5:14 Is any sick among you? Iet him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: Jas 5:15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick.

If we are asked to pray for people to be healed we should direct them to the elders of the church, if we do not have a gift of healing. I have mentioned in a recent study that we are far too quick to jump into a situation where we have very little understanding of the problem. We jump in to say, "yes, I will pray for you" at any request, without giving thought to what we are involving ourselves in. There is clearly stated here, in James epistle, a biblical approach to healing and we should direct people to that approach. Of course, if the person is not a believer, and is outside of the church, then it does not cater for them, unless they have confessed their sin and been forgiven.

If a Christian persists in asking you to pray for healing, it may be that they are circumventing Scripture and that may be because of sin. I think that we should ask why they want prayer for healing. Be careful that you do not get involved in praying against the will of God. Prayer for healing may be sinful, especially if is it to preserve a life for life's sake and enjoy more time in selfish pursuits? For those, I will pray that they might find a purpose in the service of Christ. Is it because they cannot face death for fear? I read of a dying man who asked for a candle to be placed in his hand because he feared going into the darkness. I will pray for those that they have such a relationship with Christ that they desire to be in His presence above everything. I will not pray for healing for its own sake, for it must glorify Christ.

Healing has its 'Hayflick limit" and our desires for personal healing must be tempered with the reality of death. We should not desire healing for the selfish reason of prolonging our existence here. Paul looks to the next life, *Php 1:21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain*. *Php 1:22 But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. Php 1:23 For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Php 1:24 Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you*. There is nothing for you and I on this earth and the sooner that we realise that the better. *Psa 73:25 Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee*. Do not ever say that verse unless you mean it.

If Paul wishes to stay in this life it is not for his own selfish ends. His life does not exist here anymore. If we are seated in the heavenlies why are we tied to the earth? *Eph 2:6 And hath raised us up*

together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: There is something wrong with our relationship with Jesus if we cannot walk away from this life in an instant. If we cannot follow Jesus in all things we are not fit for that kingdom. Luk 9:59 And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Luk 9:60 Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the Kingdom of God. Luk 9:61 And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. Luk 9:62 And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God.

If we are ever in a position where we are sick and desire healing, we should first go before the Lord to seek wisdom and why we should want to be healed. We often use doctors because it is a convenient way to leave the Creator out of the equation. We want 'God' for eternal life and Doctors for "eternal this life'. Like Asah, 2Ch 16:12 And Asa in the thirty and ninth year of his reign was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great: yet in his disease he sought not to the LORD, but to the physicians. Asah had a spiritual problem because he had unrighteously put a prophet in the stocks. He was given a taste, so to speak, of his own medicine. Physicians have their place but they are no substitute for a consultation with God. Why? Because disease may have spiritual origins.

During our studies, we observed that there was the rise of a new class of 'healer' who claims to be able to make the mind better. My opinion is that the rise of psychiatry has the same function as the old priesthoods of Christendom. They existed not to cure the souls but to control them and 'save' them. They take people into their confessionals and profess to give them cures for their sins and ills. They give them happy pills, comforting words, a chemical 'hail Mary', not a cure. People become more enslaved rather than freed as a result. The old priests took men away from God and Christ and placed the Institution of 'man's church' in their place. The modern priests of Psychiatry do the same. They define a new 'normality', they define the 'disorders' and prescribe the treatment. This is satanic, the propagation of lies from the liar who lied at the beginning. They tell us, like the devil, that we will not die but life will get better, if we accept their lies.

I wrote to an attorney who is involved in Psychiatric Rights. I asked him if he had any evidence for psychiatrists curing anybody. He replied, "I rarely see psychiatric cure rates. It is impossible to be cured of an illness that doesn't actually exist. Mental illness is a value judgment about a person's mentality rather than a real illness. In psychiatry, cure or improvement rates would be subjective and unreliable and largely meaningless." We concluded that there is only one person who can restore the mind, create a 'right mind', renew our mind and put His sound mind in us. Jesus Christ.

We have considered the reality of the world of demonization and that believers can be afflicted by satan. This in turn should make us far more aware of the conflict that we are presently engaged in. Sickness can be a result of a satanic attack. That may result in wilful sin and in turn incur the sanction of Christ. 1Co 11:29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 1Co 11:30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. However, there is not one Scripture that shows we should fear satan, nor that we are powerless. In fact we are stronger than the devil when we face him. Jas 4:7 Submit yourselves

therefore to God. **Resist the devil, and he will flee from you**. Jas 4:8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

Christ must be central to our lives and our thinking. He is not a side dish, next to the plate of life. He is not a Sunday side show that we can occasionally turn to while putting our main effort into enjoying this life. He is and must be the main show and this life merely something we endure on our way to glory. If we love this world, the next is shut to us and we do not have God's love in us. 1Jn 2:15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 1Jn 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 1Jn 2:17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. Considering the stakes, only a fool would throw this opportunity away.

We close with the words of Paul which puts life in perspective. 2Co 4:16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. 2Co 4:17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; 2Co 4:18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen are eternal.

AMEN!